THE MAGAZINE OF CINEMA & TELEVISION FANTASY №42 70p

GREAT FREE COMPETITION

STARBURST

DRAGONSLAYER

A FIRST LOOK AT THE BIG FANTASY FILM FOR 1982

WE PRESENT EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS WITH

JENNY AGUTTER, AMERICAN WEREWOLF STAR

SEAN CONNERY ON JAMES BOND

DISNEY ANIMATOR WOLFGANG REITERMAN

THE MAKING OF JOHN CARPENTER'S THE THING

PLUS LOOKS AT SHOGUN ASSASSIN, THE BURNING, HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY, LADY STAY DEAD, AMICUS MOVIE POSTERS, THE SECRET OF NIMH AND THE FILMS OF WILLIAM CASTLE

THE NEW DOCTOR WHO

...RESENTS A SPECIAL ...IEW OF THE NEW ...HAIN'S LONGEST ...OW.

AMICUS POSTER GALLERY

AS PART ... OF ... WE HAVE COMPILED ... OF OUR POPULAR ...

DRAGONSLAYER

THIS MONTH'S COVER FEATURE LOOKS AT A FABULOUS FANTASY MOVIE, A MAJOR NEW PARAMOUNT CO-PRODUCTION FEATURING THE SPECIAL EFFECTS WIZARDRY OF STAR WARS' INDUSTRIAL LIGHT AND MAGIC TEAM, HEADED BY BRITISHER BRIAN JOHNSON.

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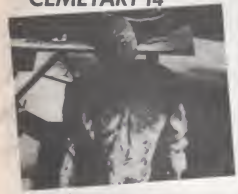

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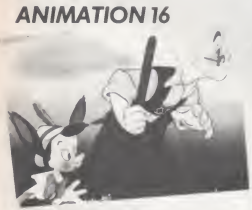

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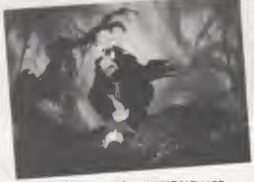

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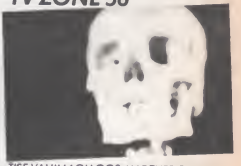

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STARBURST LETTERS

SF, SI! GORE, NON!

Some of our readers (three to be precise) seem to be a little upset by issue 40 of ***Starburst****. They felt that we should not cover movies like* ***An American Werewolf in London*** *and* ***Dead and Buried****. So much so that they felt compelled to write. Below is a typical letter . . .*

I'm writing to tell how sick I am of **Starburst**. A better name would be *Bloodburst*.

I get *Starlog* and it's not full of blood and horror.

I've been to my newsagent and cancelled my monthly **Starburst** copy.

I thought your magazine would improve with the passage of time, but it hasn't.

It's no wonder that cinemas are closing down if these sort of films are all that's on offer.

Danny McCullough,
Wormhill,
Derbyshire.

Alan McKenzie replies: "Of course, Danny, if you don't like looking at stills from gore movies, that's fair enough. We hope that you and Starlog *are very happy together. But* ***Starburst*** *is a fantasy magazine. We feel obliged to cover as many fantasy films as we possibly can. We feel that we cannot ignore a film just because it contains scenes of violence. And if we only printed non-gory stills, we would be misleading our readers. ('Oh,* ***The Beyond*** *looks like a nice, clean-living film. I think I'll go and see it!'). And, quite frankly, three letters is just not a sufficient number to cause* ***Starburst*** *to change editorial policy.*

"Any one out there care to comment?

"And while we're on the subject of horror . . ."

AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF

When it comes to comedy-horror films, we're normally given rubbish like **Carry on Screaming**, send-ups like **Love at First Bite** or the unintentionally funny ones like **Amityville Horror**.

John Landis' **An American Werewolf in London** is none of these, but a superb film that works on two levels, in that it's funny and scarey in just the right degree of both.

The transformation scenes are marvellous and better than those in **The Howling**, although both use the same techniques.

But no dark corners here. The change occurs smack-dab in the middle of a well-lit room.

David Naughton works well as our afflicted here but Griffin Dunne as the undead and decaying friend has the comical lines that make hi stand out.

If the film falls short at all it's at the end. I felt there should have been something extra, rather that a dead stop. But all said and done—don't miss it.

P. Douglas,

London E3.

We knew that someone out there likes the horror coverage!

IT'S ONLY A BROSNAN!

A friend was recently flicking through my copies of **Starburst** and said, "That film *It's Only a Movie* must be good to get a review every month," and then stared in puzzlement at the star billing before saying, "but *who* the hell is John Brosnan?"

Says it all, don't you think?

Richard Green,
Leeds,
Yorks.

Er, yes. But what did you expect from some character who doesn't even buy his own copies. (Told you we'd make you a star, John!)

HARD DAY'S SILENT NIGHT

Being a regular reader of **Starburst** magazine, I was looking through the latest, fantastic issue (no 39) and was particularly interested in a review of a film called **Deathouse** by Tony Crawley.

In his review, Mr Crawley makes it sound as if the film is the latest from writer Jeffrey Konvitz and the date—1981—can be seen in the credits on page 11. In fact, the film was really made way back in 1973, under the title, **Silent Night, Bloody Night**, as my enclosed cutting from the book, **TV Movies**, shows. The director, cast and plot synopsis all match up to **Deathouse**.

Apart from that, keep up the good work. The new look **Starburst** is really excellent.

Tony Clinton,
London NW6.

Although I usually agree with and respect Tony Crawley's views on the horror genre, when he makes a mistake it is a BIG one!

Firstly, he now raves about John Carpenter being virtually The Saviour of the fantasy genre. How odd! Back in 1979, when **Halloween** was released, a certain Mr. Tony Crawley gave the film a 'poor' rating in *Films Illustrated* (Vol 8, No 90, February 1979). Is this the same person who now worships the ground The Shape walks on? perhaps he would enlighten us?

Next, in **Starburst 39**, Mr Crawley reviews (and states) a movie called **Deathouse**, which he saw in Cannes. He says that is set in 1981. Wrong! He says that it is a melding of **Don't Answer The Phone, The Amityville Horror** and **Friday The 13th**. Wrong! He also says that Jeffrey Konvitz told him that no one would ever mess up his writing again. They haven't—at least not so

far.

You see, **Deathouse** isn't a new film at all. It was originally released in 1973, under the title **Silent Night, Bloody Night**. No wonder then that Mr Crawley thought that Astrid Herren had aged well! The film is also available on video from Intervision and, contrary to Mr Crawley's opinion, I think it is well worth watching. After all, wasn't it ahead of it s time if it managed to blend three films that would not be made for another seven years?!

Anyway, keep up the good work, Crawley & Co, and please try to review **Suspiria** sometime—a sadly overlooked masterpiece.

Mike Darbyshire,
Wigan,
Lancs.

In sackcloth and ashes, Tony Crawley replies: "Yes, well, whatever you can say about old Brosnan, he doesn't make kingsize bloomers like mine. (He runs up a nice line in laced frillies, all the same). I could plead the panic of Cannes, the lack of honesty from Cannon films, not to mention my sheer ignorance in reading the Latin numerals giving the year of release on any film's credits, but no . . . I was wrong and that's that! Apart from thanking both readers for putting me right, and warning their fellow readers from being cheated into paying for a film they might have seen already under another name in cinemas or on their VCRs. (Though I doubt it was ever released in Britain).

My review holds true, however. Any film can be compared, or termed a mix of other films made after it—that obviously depends on the year you see it in; not that any of the three I mentioned are exactly originals themselves but based in part of various earlier films. While Mike's Intervision catalogue cutting sells it as 'a juicy, macabre story', Tony's cutting from his book (ouch! don't ever cut up books, Tony; we'll believe any quotes or can always verify them) is more honest in describing it as an 'uneven low budgeter'. Konvitz can't have thought much of it, either. He never mentioned the film to me while slagging off Michael Winner for messing up his writing in **The Sentinel** *(1977), which, in the circumstances, would have been a logical tack . . . if his first film, (or to play safe I'd better say, earlier film) had been any good. The original title hardly improves matters. A blood night it surely is. How much better for Konvitz,* et al, *if it had been, like John Carradine's role, truely silent, as well.*

"As to John Carpenter: right again. I didn't rate **Halloween** *that highly in 1979. It's just looked infinitely better over the years in other viewings, and all the more so given all its rip-offs; none of which come close to touching Carpenter's main attribute—not so much horror, as being able to make cinematic movies. He remains one of our genre's saviours in that he doesn't simply rely on the blood bucket (although, alas, his production of* **Halloween II** *sadly does). You're wrong on one thing only, Mike. The ground I worship is that which upon* Mrs *Carpenter's shape struts!"*

We regret that we cannot enter into correspondence with individual readers. There just aren't enough hours in the day!

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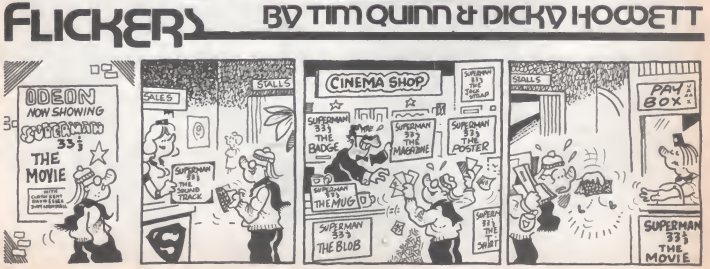
Opposite page: A selection of gory stills from **American Werewolf in London** *(top) and* **Dead and Buried** *(below). Right:* **Deathouse** *revisited.*

FLICKERS

BY TIM QUINN & DICKY HOGGETT



THINGS TO COME

ASIMOV'S EPIC

So, the word is that **Close Encounters** will be on ITV over Christmas. Big deal! There's something much, but much bigger on the drawing board of one of the **CEJK** producers, Michael Phillips. He's announced a movie of Isaac Asimov's classic sf trilogy, **Foundation** . . . Or, to be accurate, *three* movies.

And that's not three movies to be released, **Star Wars** or **Superman** style over the next few years. But all at once, in a matter of months of each other. Starting as early as the summer of 1983.

That *is* early, considering Phillips has not revealed his writer, director, stars— nor even which studio is backing this bold venture. If he's got them all, he's not saying anything. Or not yet.

Steven Spielberg is being rumoured, though, the director. Particularly now that his and Phillips' plans for a proper **Close Encounters** sequel seem to have evaporated. As indeed they would, if Phillips has been talking to Spielberg about Asimov. He is, after all, a somewhat better writer than Spielberg is. And certainly more prodigous. Asimov had his 200th book published in 1979, when *Time* magazine commented "no single author has ever written more books about more subjects . . ." Into science fiction since selling his first tale to *Amazing Stories* in 1938, the "devilishly handsome" Asimov (that's his book-jacket description of himself) has written psychology, maths, poetry, mysteries, humour, US history, limericks, science, and The Bible. Another tome was on how to be a dirty old man.

A survivor of two marriages, one heart attack, thyroid cancer and his own enormous and unbeshed ego (Kurt Vonnegut based his Kilgore Trout on him), Asimov comments, "A lot of people can write. I have to! I realised back in Boston University that I would never be a first-rate scientist. But I could be a first-rate writer. The choice was an easy one. I just decided to do what I did best."

His best is great. Asimov, of course, is way up there with Vonnegut and Bradbury as the real Godfathers of science fiction, American style. The last film of his work was **Fantastic Voyage** in 1966. No, he didn't create Raquel Welch, es well. That was Hollywood casting, end maybe the reason it's taken so long for any film producer to talk turkey with him again.

The Foundation Trilogy is the best of the Asimov output for my money, Michael Phillips' and a couple of million other readers' as well. It's a giant undertaking, covering more than a thousand years of future history—an sf version of Gibbon's **Decline and Fall of the Romen Empire**. It began as a collection of short stories serialised in *Astounding* magazine more than 25 years ago. In book form, it won the Science Fiction Writers of America's Hugo Award. In radio form, it made a terrific serial from Aunty BBC a few years back. (Good time to repeat it, Aunty).

The trilogy's message is universal. Ideas can outlive those who thought them out, but empires are ephemeral. Only historians survive. Like Gibbon. And Asimov.

It's easy to get excited about a film project like this one. Everything can go rotten before it's shot, edited and released. I mean, just think back to **The Martian Chronicles** . . . With Michael Phillips at the helm, I doubt if too much will go wrong. He knows what he's got—the inside straight on producing what should be the best sf movie since **2001**. Or even better.

2001 II

Which reminds me . . . It looks as if Arthur C. Clarke is not merely scribbling away on his 2001 sequel in Sri Lanka for his publisher, but for Stanley Kubrick as well. Watch (t)his space . . .

THE TOPS, BY GEORGE (AND STEVEN)

By George, he's done it. The latest box-office tabulations of our Film City computers, prove that George Lucas is now the producer uniquely responsible for three of the top four movies in history. **Star Wars**, naturally, remains in the no 1 position. **The Empire Strikes Back** has lately vaulted into the no 2 spot, having earned 134,038,000 dollars up to October. **Raiders of the Lost Ark** is no 4 as I write this with a first release round tally of 100-million . . . and climbing.

As well as this remarkable Lucas treble, the new figures prove a Steven Spielberg double . . . For the no 3 film, recently sideswiped by **Empire**, and with Steven's **Raiders** hard on its fins, is **Jaws** in the 133,435,000 area.

And do you remember, there was a time when everyone didn't go to our kind of movies!

Double up those figures for a rough idea of world business . . . which means that the three Lucas movies have earned, from cinemas alone, 819,446,000 dollars. The mind biggles. And the calculators explode.

RAIDERS' RIP I

The **Raiders** rip-offs continue . . . I've been scanning **High Road To China**, which is very much in **Raiders** country— with our hero, Bedee O'Malley, no less, flying across the world in '14-18 planes, meeting bizarre characters (a nymphish contessa and a roller-skating Indian prince!) while buying a tycoon's release from a Chinese warlord with the ransom price of a priceless jade antiquity . . .

RAIDERS RIP II

But the worst **Raiders** rip—more of a downright slash, really—is this horrendously conceived ad 'art' for young British director Alan Birkinshaw's first international biggie, **Invaders of the Lost Gold**. At least, the designers have got the logo type just about right, or as close as they dare to keep the producer out of the law courts. Funny thing— Alan's film wasn't called that when he shot it in the summer.

Anyway, does anyone really want to see a movie with Stu Whitman and Edmund Purdom in it? Of course not! That's why producer Dick Randall has to try to make his movie seem that which it plainly is not . . .

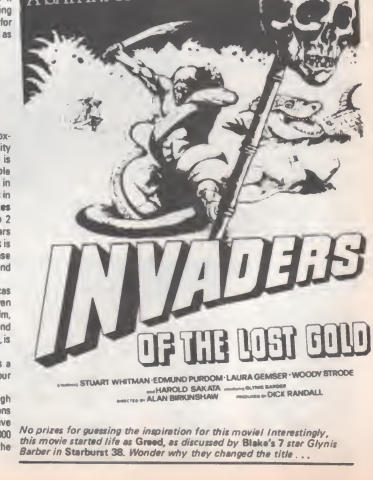
RAIDERS ART

For those rip-off merchants who want to learn just how to make such a box-office winner, I commend watching a new release from George's Lucasfilm. It was seen on American television in November. But I have no news, as yet, if **The Making of Raiders of the Lost Ark** is headed our way. This vivid documentary—lots of intriguing stuff about the stars and Spielberg's storyboards—lasts an hour only, and is culled from director Philip Schuman's 70 *hours* of footage on the shooting of the smasheroo of the year.

There, as you see . . . To make a big film, you have to think big. And be able to afford 70 hours of celluloid on the making of it. The cost of which works out more than the budget for **Invaders of the Lost Gold**, I shouldn't wonder!

George Lucas backed the film, then gave it—apparently for free or a nominal dollar—to the Public Broadcasting Service network in American for a prime-time screening. The Beeb or ITV should get on the phone immediately!

Director Phil Schuman (another of the young San Francisco breed; he's 28) is not sure what happens to the film, or the rest of the 70 hours from here on. "I hope that somebody might re-edit all the footage for use as an education



No prizes for guessing the inspiration for this movie! Interestingly, this movie started life as **Greed**, *as discussed by* **Blake's 7** *star Glynis Barber in* **Starburst** *38. Wonder why they changed the title . . .*

Compiled by Tony Crawley

series for film-makers," he says. They'd certainly have enough to work from. If they also had the time. I've recently been working on a film of a film in Paris, with just 50 minutes of so of interviews—and that's taken *days* to cut into shape. Seventy hours could take years). Schuman's interviews are with Lucas, Spielberg, Herrison Ford, Karen Allen and stunter Terry Leonerd. The hour version is packed with interest—and action. Rather like **Raiders** itself.

"George just wanted to see a film about film," comments Phil. Well, of course, he did. Isn't that how Lucas began . . .? Having made his short version of **THX 1138:4RB**, George was one four students selected to make shorts on the shooting of Carl Foreman's 1967 Western, **McKenna's Gold**. Lucas' work proved Foreman's favourite end-led to a Warner Brothers' scholarship to observe the making of **Finian's Rainbow**, being directed in 1968 by a young fat fella called Coppola. That led to Lucas joining Francis es his assistant on **The Rain People** in 1969—during which time, George made another documentary about the production. He called it **Film-maker**, and it's recognised as one of the best studies on the filming craft. And *that*, of course, led to the larger version of **THX 1138** . . . and all that followed.

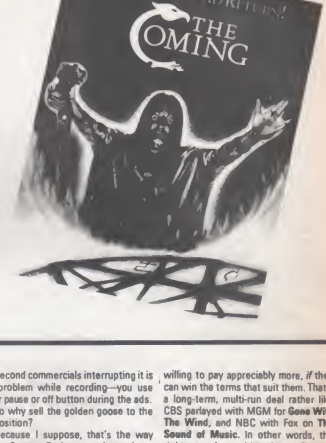
Phil Schuman may not be that lucky. But at least, he's obviously got e foot in the Skywalker Ranch door . .

SALEM REVISITED

Bert I. Gordon, who gave us **Empire of the Ants** (1977), picks up on Stephen King's (and Arthur Miller's) obsession with Salem witchcraft in **The Coming**. There are said to be more than 350 live witches still at work in the Massachussetts township today. But the movie takes us back first to 1962 when they really had a witch of a time!

Susan Swift is the 12-year-old brat naming names and sending twenty or more innocents to their deaths by calling them witches. (You begin to see Arthur Miller's fascination with this period, right?) She's assisted by John Peters in a re-run or Vincent Price's **Witchfinder General**. Cut to 1981 end we find Susan paying for her 17th Century's role's sins. She's possessed by the spirit of Peters, and on the verge of insanity as once more gruesome deaths follow her witch-hunting. A couple of tv nemes (Guy Stockwell, Dean's brother, end Albert Salmi) round up the cast, which also includes Ann Southern's ravishing daughter, Tisha Sterling.

Just a middlin' pot-boiler, though. What else from Bert I. Gordon, the sole remaining King of B-movie Schlock now that Williem Castle is no more. As writer, producer and director, the 60-year-old Bert I. has rarely changed course or genres since **King Dinosaur**, no less, in 1955. His other B's include **Beginning of the End, Cyclops** and **The Amazing Colossal Men** (eli in 1957), **Attack of the Puppet People** (who's kidding?), **War of the Colossal Beast, The Spider** (1958), **Tormented** (1960), **Village of the Giants** (1965), **Picture Mommy Dead** (1966), **Necromancy** (1972), **The Mad Bomber** (1973), **The Food of the Gods** (1976). He's happy in B-land.



RELIEF?

George Lucas is probably quite pleased that everyone is now revving up to follow his **Raiders** formula. It leeves him end his team elone to get on with specie fantasy egain with **Revenge of the Jedi**. Once *they* start eping that movie, George'll be back at work on the **Raiders** sequel—which Steven Spielberg hes already agreed to direct with Harrison Ford again. (Oh, you knew that?)

And *while* the next one will be fairly action-packed, I heer it will be more tied up with the Lucas intrigue in archaeology and enthropology . . . not to mention, the occult. And by the time, *they* start copying that one, George will be into his new form of galactic adventures with the first of the beginning trilogy of the **Star Wars** series. In short, backwards or forwards in time, he always remains one step ahead of his plagiarists.

RAIDERS QUIZ

Enough, enough, of **Raiders** for this month at least. (Does a month's column go by, I wonder, without mention of Lucas. No, and that's what helps make the fantasy world go around these days). So here's a poser for you . . . *How many other films can you name with* **Raiders** *as the opening word of the title . . .? Answers at end of the column. But wait until you get there. No peaking, OK?*

STAR TV WARS

Hollywood shockwaves of the hour es you'll reed with surprise elongside the Page Three gals—is thet **Star Wars** *and* **Empire Strikes Back** ere up for sale to tv. (Relax . . . That's American television, of course. British tv couldn't afford to buy their trailers).

I must say it seems a very stupid move to me, end no doubt to George Lucas, elthough he must have had some say in the matter. Putting these monster hits on the box does not help the next six chapters in George's series. Once films get on the Stateside tube, chopped up here 'n' there to accommodete all the commercials, they become as bovine as the rest of network programming which, as I've stated here before, is a case of the bland leeding the blend.

In fact, es tv around the world proves, familiarity breeds contempt with tv stars and shows. Show **Star Wars** too often over the next few years and it just won't be so different. It'll look like **Hamlet and the Seven Dwarfs**! The magic will pall, and interest will fade in George's next adventures in the series.

Not only thet, but since money is at the root of the sale, once **Star Wars** is shown, the fans can record it for free, whether that's an infringement of copyright or not. So who'd want to watch it the second time it's networked. Come to that, who'll buy the cassette enymore. (The fact that the film would have up to thirty-five 30-second commercials interrupting it is no problem while recording—you use your pause or off button during the ads.

So why sell the golden goose to the opposition?

Because I suppose, that's the way 20th Century-Fox's new boss (new owner, in fact) wants it . . . ie: cash in hand, not stuck on the shelf. According to Devid Giler, one of the Fox **Alien** team, Fox told Gary Kurtz that the only reeson it re-issued the film at Easter in America was to prove it was finished es far es cinemas were concerned and should be sold off to the box. The re-release proved them wrong (it went through the roof anew). Fox remained unmoved and let the three main American networks know that both films were available. At the right price. Or deel.

Which, of course, could end the matter right there. Because Fox say the right price is 20-million dollars per film! That's far too high for ABC, NBC or CBS. The winning network could only pull in, at most, 7-million from commercials during a screening. High or not, which network dare lose out on the chance to cream their rivels in the ratings by airing **Star Wars** and **Empire** . . .? It's an offer they can't refuse.

Forget "the right price". The outcome will depend on "the deal". For example, I gether the 20-mill' tag is for one screening only, of either film . . . and then not before 1984. That's not only too high, it's not enough!

I know one network (at least) is willing to pay appreciably more, *if* they can win the terms that suit them. That's a long-term, multi-run deal rather like CBS parlayed with MGM for **Gone With The Wind**, and NBC with Fox on **The Sound of Music**. In other words, the rights to show either Lucas film for about ten times over the next ten years *if*, too, they could start these screenings by the autumn of '82.

Lots of ifs, huh?

For such a deal, this one network (or either of its rivals) could earn across a decade, a total of et least 70-million dollars per picture. Therefore it would pay as high as 60-million smackers for the privilege of making ten mill. And probably more, given inflation. We are, of course, talking double these figures really. No network is going to buy just one of the films. Both, or nothing. As such, the two *Star Wars* movies are a sure investment buck. Or, ell right, 120-million bucks.

If Mervin Davies wants to stay in the movie business (and the way he's putting Fox's prime assets on the block, it doesn't look that way), he should take a lesson from Walt Disney. The Disney movies have never, or rarely, been sold to television. They're on cassette, but that's all. They're just pulled off the shelf over the years end make another mint. Indeed, without them, Disneyland, Disneyworld end now EPCOT, could never have been built. That's called hanging on to your assets . . . not passing them off to your rival down the street who ruins them.

THINGS TO COME

CONAN COPIES I

Some months before we view Arnold Schwarzenegger flexing his Conan muscles (my eyes will be more focussed on sexy Sandahl Bergman's *er . . . muscles*), but the barbaric rip-offs have begun already. The most lavish (if you can be most lavish for ten million dollars, these days) looks like being **The Beastmaster**. That's as in "he fought like a god, he soared like an eagle, he loved like a man, he ruled as The Beastmaster." Ah!

His name is Dar, a heroic warrior from the dawn of time—but with more telepathic powers than Conan and Co. Dar, for instance, "can see through the eyes of his giant eagle, giving him vision over immense distance," according to writer-director Don Coscarelli: "He can telepathically 'touch' four special beasts in this manner—directing his powerful panther, say, to mete out swift, crashing death in combat." Aha!

Coscarelli directed **Phantasm**, of course, a film I never wholly understood. No matter, it impressed producer Silvio Tabet sufficiently to spend the last year rounding up the cash for Don's new fantasy script (co-written with Paul Pepperman). Tabet has come up with more than money—he's nabbed **Barry Lyndon**'s Oscar-winning British cinematographer, John Alcott, to lense the show as Dar, and his animal team, avenge the murder of his family and entire (elevated-stilt) village.

The film, naturally, calls for mucho high-priced effects and sets. "I've cut out quite a challenge," says Coscarelli. "To create a vast encient walled city, to construct its 70 ft tall Pyramid of Sacrifice, to choreograph the spectacular battle scenes involving a cast of hundreds *(didn't they use to boast: thousands)* of mounted warriors comprising the Dark Legions and to bring to life the characters and bizarre creatures which inhabit **The Beastmaster's** world."

Lotsa luck.

CONAN COPY II

Not far behind in the copy-Conan race is Italy (where else?), with **The World of Yor**. This is another blond super fantasy hero, born in the **Yor** novel by Juan Zanotto and Rey Collins. Robert Bailey has trapped out the script for that pseudonymous Italian director of spaghetti Westerns and horror, Antony M. Dawson, alias Antonio Margheriti. The switch with Yor is that he rules the roost not in the old dawn of time bit, but some futuristic dawn . . .

CONAN COPY 3.

Firmly rooted in the mythical past: Peter Yates's **Krull** starts production at Pinewood on December 14, just in time for the Christmas break! No rush, the finished movie isn't due for release until the summer of '83!

Looking much forward to settling in to London is the film's American actor, Ken Marshall, who has been toiling on Italy's **Marco Polo** in China, of all places, and found it wanting rather in the basic amenities. Marshall is a trained Shakesperian actor, who did well in the recent Broadway revival of **West Side Story**. His film debut was opposite Burt Lancaster and Marcello Mastroianni in Liliana Cavini's **The Skin**, Italy's entry at Cannes this year.

Production designer on the **Krull** film is Stephen Grimes from such movies as **The Bible, Lawrence of Arabia, Urban Cowboy** and **True Confessions**. Peter Yates has handed the special effects chore to Derek Meddings . . . which must mean the next Bond or **Superman** film won't be starting just yet awhile.

A selection of production paintings from the forthcoming release, **Beastmaster.** *See "Conan Copy 3".*

CORMAN IN SPACE

Sad to report, Roger Corman's new space-opera is a no-no! You know it's a loser because it's gone through three titles already . . . and got nowhere at all. When Corman opened the movie for summer release Stateside, it was stuck with the pretentious handle of **Mindwarp: An Infinity of Terror**. Result: Zilch. Okay, he tried again . . . how about **Planet of Horrors?** Yeah, that has a certain Cormanic ring to it. (Everywhere but at the box-office cash-register). If at first you don't succeed, sock it to 'em differently. And so now it's re-released as . . . wait for it . . . **Galaxy of Terror.** Aha! Yeah well . . . Good title. Lousy movie.

Now, before you start writing to me the way you write to critic John Brosnan, let me assure you I'm not alone in this opinion. American reviewers agree that the movie is passable when sticking to rockets and monsters making short lunches of the people in the ships, but loses all control when lapsing into a cosmic mind games finish. Particularly when, as one critic phrased it, the "story is nothing that couldn't have been improvised by a bunch of 12-year-olds playing Spaceman and Aliens on a slow Saturday afternoon."

B.D. Clark is the director who couldn't hold his act together. Or his actors: Edward Albert (son of Eddie); Erin Moran, Zalman King; and everybody's **Favourite Martian**, Ray Walston. None of them look right in a sf monster show. Erin Moran's only claim to such a genre is that she's the chubby kid-sister-next-door type in tv's **Happy Days** which is kind of based on George Lucas **American Graffiti**. And that's a pretty tenuous connection with space fantasies.

Tom Campbell's special effects nearly save this illegitimate son of **Alien**. Tom was one of the "additional photographers" on the much better **Battle Beyond the Stars** last year, and **Galaxy's** effects come from Corman's same effects unit in Venice beach. His monsters are fine even the huge worm thingie that turns up, or on, in a somewhat repellant sex scene. Mercifully short at 80 minutes, **Galaxy** misses John Sayles' scripting and, most of all, Sybil Danning. Put her in a scene with the monstrous worm and that would have been something worth seeing!

THINGS TO COME...

MOVIE HARVEST

From little acorns, oak trees grow . . . Yes, even from such little a-corny movies as **The Cannonball Rally** . . . The Burt Reynolds' car-muncher did so well around the world, it enables the originally Hong-Kong-based Golden Harvest company to plough some 49-million dollars into a flock of movies for '82.

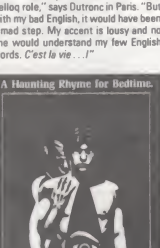
Top of their pile will be the much postponed **High Road To China**, which has various effinities to **Raiders** (see below) . . . More Jackie Chan chopsocky actioners . . . **The Rats**, another horror movie from Paul **Prom Night** Lynch . . . and an 18-million dollar sf number called **Megaforce**. But not, you may be pleased to heer, a **Cannonball** re-tread. They can't get the stars or the stunters back in harness for a sequel. They still have the director on tap, though. Hal Needham, an ex-stunter himself, is making **Megaforce** in the Las Vegas desert, with his usual crowd of black-end-blue devil-may-care stuntchiens. Barry Bostwick-so guest as John Gilbert in **Moviola** on the box last year—stars with a veritable army of fantasy hardware.

BELLOQ Mk I

Okay, bet you didn't know this little Raiders truth . . . Speilberg's first choice for the Paul Henreidish nasty, Belloq, was the French singer and actor Jacques Dutronc. "For me," says Spielberg, "he is the best actor in the world right now and a true star. He's sensual, intelligent—very hard inside and out. The women love him because of his apparent timidity at the same time, he's a great comic. He could be a great international star, another Robert Redford—except for the language. He can't put many words of English together, just as my French (even after working with Truffaut in **Close Encounters**) is limited to page two of *French without Pain!*"

So who *is* this fella that such an all-American superstar movie-brat raves about? Dutronc, a 38-year-old Parisian, started out as a singer and still cuts the odd albums, but like so many French pop stars—well, singers— he's found his true metier in screen acting. (Even the immortal Jean Gabin and Yves Montand began as singers). He still writes the music for many of his films— he's made about twenty since 1973. Keith Carradine appeared in Dutronc 's first french movie, and since then the Frenchman—who lives with the 60s' singer, Francoise Herdy—has worked with the best directors and ectors on the Paris scene: from Godard to Claude Lelouch. He co-starred with Romy Schneider in **L'important c'est d'aimer**, which is rather like the first chapter of the Polish Andrzej Zulawsky's Cannes shocker, **Possession** . . . and ironically for the man who impressed Spielberg and Lucas so much, he's also in this year's major French sf movie (and flop), *Malevil*. His image is part James Dean, part young Gabin—and it's rare to find him on-camera, in films or tv singing, minus his trademarks. Very dark glasses. And a giant cigar.

"I was sorry to have to refuse the Belloq role," says Dutronc in Paris. "But with my bad English, it would have been a mad step. My accent is lousy and no one would understand my few English words. *C'est la vie . . .!*"



MAD STEP-MOMMA

"Graphic Violence," says the advertising. It's not quoting a review, just a warning (mature audience suggested) from the maker of **Butcher, Baker, Nightmare Maker**, the bloody creation of three writers, one of whom rejoices (presumably) in the implausible name of Boon Collins. The joyous Kristy McNichol's kid brother, Jimmy, tops the bill. The real star is Susan Tyrrell, though. Since being discovered by John Houston in **Fat City** in 1972, not a lot else has gone right for Sue. She's fallen prey to the underground and allegedly *avant-garde* circuit. Now she appears to be making ready to succeed Shelley Winters. She(s) mothers young Jimmy McNichol, since adopting her nephew at three. By 17, she's made the lad into a surrogate husband figure—and viciously kills anyone who might separate them. Not much fun for his girlfriend. Big Bo Svenson is the cop on her case, and William Asher directed the grisly proceedings, which badly requires a new title. And poster. What's wrong for instance with **SmotherLove?**

POLISH WELL(E)S

Not only the great Andrzej Wajda makes film about what's happening in Poland today . . . now. Piotr Szulkin, the clever guy responsible for **The Golem** in 1979, has turned out a smart parable about current Polish life. He sets his new film on December 18, 1999, and dedicated it to both H.G. Wells and Orson Welles. You'll understand why when I translate his title, **Wojna Swietow Nastepne Stulecie**. It means **The War of the Worlds—Next Century.**

Like the Welles radio version of the Wells book, Szulkin has a media man announcing the arrival of Martians on earth. He's not a radio reporter but a tv-newsman, of course. But es soon es he delivers his shattering news, he's promptly handed a new script by his government. He has to tell Poles to welcome the Martians "with embraces of love." That they do, but it goes wrong. The Martians end the Polish cops are beating up people in the streets, busting into their homes . . .

The hero's wife (Krystyna Jende) is kidnapped, or arrested . . . who knows anymore? She gets showed into a sack! And our hero, rejoicing in the name of Iron Idem, is their next target. He's trouble, you see, as well as having a great following on his news programme. He does his best to warn his viewers about what's really happening during a rock concert. He's stopped, arrested and his news show is replaced by something called "The Now Better News" . . . en early item on this being his "trial."

Science fiction? Don't believe it! You don't have to be Polish to understand that for Iron Idem (well played by Roman Wilhelmi), you read Lech Walesa; for the invading Martians, read Russians. It says a lot for Poland, though, that Szulkin could make and *show* his movie.

INDIANA Mk I

Back for a moment to **High Road to China. That film should have pre-dated Raiders**. It was due for shooting in 1979 with John Huston directing Roger Moore in the pilot's seet . . . and Bo Derek, no less, as co-pilot. When the film begins in February, on locations in Yugoslevie (well, even Wales looked enough like China once in a British film, **The Inn of the Sixth Happiness** . . . **The Most Dangerous Man in the World**, too, come to that), Eastwood action-man Brian Hutton will be in charge. For Tom Selleck, it's his big movie break. At last. He's making it while on vacation from his **Magnum** series. Playing that telehero was the reason the macho Tom couldn't accept the original Lucas-berger overture to be Indy Jones in **Raiders**, by the way. (Oh, you knew that too—you must be reading that best *cinema* magazine around).

Ironic to note that Lucas was so keen on Selleck—the ster of s eeries created by Glenn Larson, the man who aroused the Lucas ire by ripping off **Star Wars** with **Battlestar Galactica!**

3-D CONTINUES

An old pals act joins the two new 3-D features currently in production in America. The first is described officially as e "futuristic science fiction scarer"—what else when you realise **Parasite** is being produced by Irwin Yeblens, the man who brought us **Halloween, Fade to Black** and (alas) Linda Blair's **Hell Night** . . . The second three-dimensioner stems from the team that made **Fade to Black** for Yeblan's Compass company, George Braunstein and Ron Hamady. They're dropping the horrors for a surfing flick called, what else but . . . **Surf!!** Yes, the *two* exclamation marks ere obligatory. It should be three for 3-D, perhaps . . .

FAST TAKE

Finished with space, or vice-versa, **The Black Hole** is Robert Forster gets back to revengeful mayhem in **Vigilante**, with black macho heavy, Fred Williemson. Their director is Bill Lustig, the **Maniac** man. Their film is a Megnum Production. You'll remember what Dirty Herry said e Megnum could do with your (expletive deleted) head . . .

CREEPSHOW

First casting news on the George Romero/Stephen King movie, **Creepshow** tends to cement Romero's friendship with John Carpenter. It's the first time George has used familiar stars in his movies. Top two names in the creepy cast are **Fog** stars Hal Holbrook and Mrs Carpenter, Adrienne Barbeau. Also signed on: Fritz Weaver from tv's **Holocaust**; Leslie Nielson, a tv veteran and very funny in **Airplane;** actress Carrie Nye, she played the mighty Tellulah Benkhead in **Moviola;** and splendid old Swedish star Viveca Lindfors. The finished film will be unveiled at the second Los Angeles Film Market in March. As mentioned here before, author King has a role as well. So, I fancy, does the effects man, Tom Sevini. Producer Richard Rubinstein will be telling us more about the Romero-King connection (it doesn't stop here) soon.

RAIDER RESPONSE

So, how many **Raiders** films did you come up with? I've found five only; plus two more I dreamed up. **The Raiders** I with Richard Conta and George Romero's current signing, Viveca Lindfors: 1964, with Robert Culp, and Brian Keith. Of the five answers, one is e Western, the rest are sea-bound. **Raiders of the Seven Seas** (1953; stand up who remembers John Payne and Donna Reed) . . . of **Old California** (1957; one of the late Jim Davis'eka Jock Ewing's horse-operas) . . . of the **Spanish Main** (1962, British to boot with Terence Morgan and Jean Kent) . . . of **Leyte Gulf** (1963, with somebody actually called Jennings Sturgeon) and **Raiders From Beneath The Sea** (1965, with Fox lightweights Ken Scott and Merry Anders . . . ah, those were the days when Fox thought Merry was another Marilyn!. Oh sure, there may be more. My information comes from *The Film Buff's Checklist*, which is America's enswer to Halliwell in terms or research en accuracy. Wanting!

First Veiws

Body Heat

But the man of the year has to be Lawrence Kasden. He's sitting around California someplace, not bothering to go on a publicity tour—probably because he's too many films to push, and besides, is busy writing another (**Revenge of the Jedi**). Now if ever a guy deserved to be arrogant, it would be Larry. At a mere 32, he has **The Empire Strikes Back** and **Raiders of the Lost Ark** topping all lists as films of the year. He has his **Continental Divide** script (which first introduced him to Spielberg, and thereby Lucus) winning rave reviews for himself as well as star John Belushi and our director, Michael Apted. And if all that isn't enough for one year, he's just issued his writer-director debut, **Body Heat** (sadly missing from Deauville)—and the guy is up to his typing chair in more plaudits.

For all its overtones of James M. Cain (the dead author of the year), Howard Hawks and others, Kasdan's double-threat arrival is a very definite winner. Just as his **Raiders** script is all that the new Bond wasn't, this searing love story is what **The Postman Never Rings Twice** should have been. It also has another first-class acting job from the new star of the year, William Hurt (**Altered States** and **Eyewitness** aka **The Janitor**), and a wondrous new actress in Kathleen Turner. Okay so it's not sf, horror or even fantasy—but see it! (If you're old enough)

Tony Crawley

Dragonslayer

It is really difficult to see why the Walt Disney/Paramount co-production **Dragonslayer** fared less-than-spectacularly at the American box-office. As Frances Lynn states elsewhere in this issue, perhaps it was a combination of the sparse publicity and the fact that the movie was competing with such box-office giants as **Clash of the Titans** and **Raiders of the Lost Ark**. There is little doubt in my mind that the animation sequences, courtesy of **Empire Strikes Back** duo Phil Tippett and Jon Berg, far surpass the Harryhausen animation seen in **Clash**. In fact, the special effects are nothing short of spectacular. Achieved by a combination of stop-motion, full size mock-ups and Muppet-style puppetry, the dragon sequences are nevertheless smooth and seemless. It is impossible to see where one type of effects technique ends and the next begins.

The storyline evokes, in places, the same kind of excitement that was apparent in **Star Wars**, though it is clearly derivitive of the Lucas film. Peter MacNicols' Galen is reminiscent of Luke Skywalker and Sir Ralph Richardson's Ulrich is clearly intended as a kind of Ben Kenobi figure. That is, until you realise that the mythical background of **Dragonslayer** is precisely where Skywalker and Kenobi came from in the first place.

Peter Eyre's performance as the slightly dotty king swings the picture very firmly in the direction of the fairy tale, and his attempts to shield his daughter from the lottery to choose the lucky virgin who is to be lunch for the dragon evokes a strange sympathy for the character.

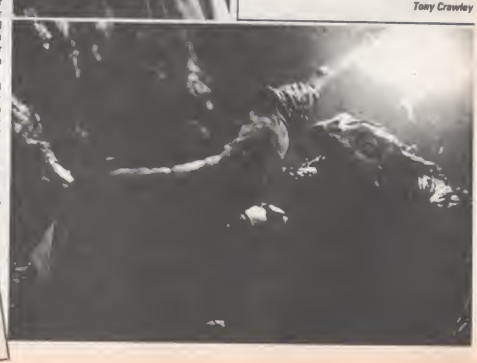
I genuinely hope that **Dragonslayer** is the financial success it deserves to be, if only to ensure that we see more movies of this kind of excellence emerging from Disney and/or Paramount in the future.

Alan McKenzie

Student Bodies

Film folk have been saying it for some time. **Student Bodies**, a big flop in the States, makes it seem true. Perhaps the horror cycle *is* over. Or is it that the fans don't like their blood-caked genre being sent up . . . Woody Allen's old co-writer, Mickey Rose (**Taka the Money and Run** and **Bananas**) makes his scripting-directing debut with this tale which mickey-takes **Halloween** from the first few inches of the opening reel . . . but runs out of satanic steam by . . . well, the last few feet of that first reel. (And the movie runs a full 86 minutes). The Stateside flop might mean Paramount will trim it for export. Might work better then. Better still, they should just release the trailer. That's a definitive hoot. The cast supplying the student bodies is unknown and likely to remain so. I hope Mickey Rose films again. His often surreal humour is the meagre saving grace of this debut (or that first reel). He deserves another chance.

Tony Crawley



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ODYSSEY 7

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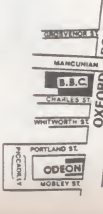

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SHOGUN ASSASSIN + DON'T PLAY WITH FIRE

Review by Alan Jones

Two quite remarkable films are around at the moment and they both come from parts of the world that very rarely seems to crop when one talks about horror/fantasy and the commercial cinema. Hopefully, these two films will go somewhat to redress that balance.

From Japan, the country that gave us **Godzilla** and all the permutations on that theme, comes **Shogun Assassin** which is now out on general release and from Hong Kong, the home of Kung-Fu movies, **Don't Play with Fire** which is on the Festival circuit having played Edinburgh, Paris and London but its English speaking soundtrack suggests that a release could be imminent.

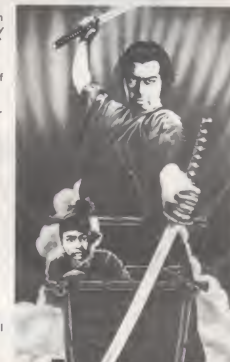
Shogun Assassin is a real oddity. It surfaced last year in the USA from Roger Corman's New World pictures in an attempt to cash in on the **Shogun** fever that was gripping the States thanks to the Richard Chamberlain mini-series on television. Knowing Roger Corman, it was also hoping to steal some of the limelight from the upcoming Ninja based movies. The film is an amalgam of the 1974 Japanese success *Baby Cart at the River Styx*, second in the *Baby Cart* series, as well as 12 minutes from the first of the series, *Sword of Vengeance*.

Quite simply this sword and sorcery saga of sorts is about Lone Wolf, the Shogun's executioner and undefeated swordsman, who swears vengeance on the Shogun leader when his wife is murdered in an attempt on his own life. On his odyssey of brutal revenge he is accompanied by his baby son, Daigoro, who he pushes in a wooden pram equipped with many, and varied, ingenious weapons. Together this formidable duo wipe out the Shogun warriors under the command of the supreme Ninja.

What producer David Weisman and director Robert Houston have done to Kenji Misumi's original film is, re-edited it, added very amusing lip-synched dialogue, dolby sound effects and one of the best up front soundtracks since **Mad Max** written by Mark Lindsay and W. Michael Lewis, the latter a very prolific disco producer. The whole melange is a slick, ridiculous, fast-paced and absurdly enjoyable epic of violence. Its visual flair is refreshing to western eyes and the many fight scene which could have become repetitive are all handled extremely cleverly with twists and surprises that keep interest at a high level. It is one of *the* most bloodiest films ever passed by the censor but it is the sort of blood-letting that is so over the top that it often becomes hysterically funny. Hands are looped off, heads split in two, throats cut-will in welters and gushers of fake blood. At one stage you can actually see the hosepipe being used. There is nothing offensive here at all, everything is handled very tongue-in-cheek. I'd better qualify that by saying that this is the impression given in the re-edited version. It is hard not to laugh when a fine spray of blood is spurting from warrior's neck and all he does is deliver a monologue on how it sounds and feels to have the life draining from him and how he has always wanted to hear it but not personally! Similarly the very device of having the baby, Daigoro, give an off-screen narration immediately sets the tone of the film. **Shogun Assassin** is well worth the time and effort to see, believe me.

Don't Play with Fire is yet more cartoon violence, this time with social comment if you really want to look for it. Obviously the Hong Kong censors did as they banned this urban horror story outright until a few changes had been made. These changes were the reconstruction of the first 30 minutes and the addition of new material! The effect this has is to change the three schoolboy protagonists from anarchist bombers into victims of circumstance. The Hong Kong censors mollified, it was this re-edited version that turned up at the London Film Festival in their Controversy section and it proved that, despite these problems, Cormanesque cinema is alive and well and flourishing in South East Asia.

In this version, at one time called **Dangerous Encounters—1st Kind**, the school-boys are now "innocent" hit-and-run drivers who had been witnessed by a psychotic young girl called Pearl. Pearl's idea of a good time is impaling her cat on a wooden fence and sticking pins into the brains of her pet mice, two images that incidentally come to have an alarming echo in the film's latter stages. With the threat of reporting them to the police, Pearl soon has the naive youths blackmailed into committing further crimes. On one of their delinquent outings they harrass a Vietnam veteran and when Pearl steals the briefcase from his car, she is amazed to find it contains hundreds of bank drafts for millions of yen. What they don't realise until it is too late, is that the vet is just one of a sadistic squad involved in an arms deal and who will stop at nothing to get their money and damning contract back. When they eventually try to "fence" the money through a Triad gang, the net is already closing in on them. The ending of **Don't Play with Fire** is a protracted and bloody massacre full of allegory as only one



Above: *The ad art for* **Shogun Assassin**. *Note the lethally-armed baby carriage, with the blades protruding from the axes for the wheels.* Above right: *Our hero and his young offspring find themselves trapped by a heavily armed mob of soldiers.* Below right: *A scene from the Hong Kong production,* **Don't Play With Fire**.

of the major leads comes out alive but terrifyingly battle scarred. Is it all a fantasy? At one stage, a bag of red paint is thrown from a building onto an innocent passer-by. The same scene is repeated at the end of the film and it tends to give the impression that all that has been bracketed in between has been a nightmare fantasy of what could happen—food for thought, indeed.

The only other film I've seen by director Tsui Hark is **The Butterfly Murders** which I found a pedestrian whodunnit and although everybody raved about it, it left me unmoved. **Don't Play with Fire** however is a neat mixture of black comedy and cynicism against a backdrop of genre conventions. It plays by all the rules laid down for an exploitation movie, and as is the case with the best of them, adds its own subversive slant to the proceedings.

The film has a lot of vitality and is extraordinarily fast paced which adds enormous impact to the more violent scenes. The strain of humour makes one of the more grotesque sequences far easier to take. It is when one of the vets is purposely jammed in a car door and is slowly dismembered as the swerving car takes to the road. As such it brought to mind the similar scene in Dario Argento's **Deep Red.**

Although there is a slimmer chance that you will see **Don't Play with Fire**, than **Shogun Assassin**, do see it if you the opportunity. It really does give us an insight into what other parts of the world are doing in genre terms, and it is one that we very rarely (more's the pity on the strength of these two films) get to see.

THE BURNING

Review by Alan Jones

A childish prank that goes wrong. A summer camp. A demented maniac stalking everybody in sight. Need I say more? This, the latest in the endless stream of **Friday the 13th/Halloween** clones, doesn't have an ounce of originality as it serves up the standard fare of teenage lust, all-American macho behaviour spiced with lashings of gore courtesy of the ubiquitous Tom Savini.

Just for the record here's the story. The much-hated caretaker of Camp Blackfoot, Cropsy *(Lou David)*, is badly burnt after a practical joke played on him misfires. He leaves hospital 5 years later and goes on a killing spree at Camp Stonewater with his favourite gardening tool—a pair of shears. There's the usual weirdo who spies on the girls in the showers and who no-one will believe when he sees Cropsy's disfigured face at the window one night. There's the usual bully who picks on the weirdo. There's the usual lines, "Oh, I've forgotten my Vitamin E tablets. I must go back to my dark cabin alone and look for them." And of course there are the usual lapses in logic.

The Burning has some shock value if you are prepared to fall for all the well-worn tricks of the trade and put out of your mind every film you've seen in the last three years. The same gardening shears Cropsy uses on his victims are in all probability the same ones used to snip out some of the more gratuitous death-dealing. For once I don't mind as it makes the film mercifully shorter. Out of the catalogue of routine deaths, the best is where Cropsy carries the bully impaled on shears and skewers him to a tree. Something is wrong with a film when you are interested in the mechanics of such a scene rather than quivering with fright.

Two things in the film's favour are, thankfully, no twist ending and Rick Wakeman's basic, but effective, score but these are no real recommendations.

One character in the film sums up the whole enterprise. She's Cropsy's first pathetic victim—a raddled old hooker, tired and past it, going through the motions to pay the rent. Somehow, I think she and British director Tony Maylam have a lot in common.

THE HOUSE BY THE CEMETARY

Review by Alan Jones

Colleagues from the continent tell me that a new term has been coined to describe the prolific output of Italian director Lucio Fulci. Fulchit. (If nothing else, just in case you didn't know how to pronounce his name, that tips you off in no uncertain terms). I think this is grossly unfair—it really does seem that I am a minority in my growing admiration for Fulci. And as far as I am concerned, it is *still* growing. His latest film, **The House by the Cemetary** is yet another step in the right direction and rather than run the risk of repeating more-or-less what I said about **The Beyond,** something, by the way, I am still receiving a lot of comment about, suffice it to say that it builds to what is one of the best sustained climaxes of Gothique melodrama seen in recent memory.

This time around Fulci and his collaborators from **The Beyond,** Dardano Sacchetti and Giorgio Mariuzzo, go further back in time and use the *Frankenstein* theme with an added dash of **The Amityville Horror** as it tells of a family who leave New York to go and live in an old house in New England. Norman is a young historian who has persuaded his wife Lucy and their son Bob to move there so he can carry out some specialised research. Almost immediately, there are strange noises and occurrences in the house which has a gruesome past as it was once the property of a Dr Freudstein who used to dabble in bizarre surgical practices. Bob seems to be particularly attuned to the house as he meets a strange girl called May who disappears from photographs and tells him of a premonition she has had concerning his babysitter, Ann. As Norman learns about his predecessor, a man called Peterson who became so obsessed by the Freudstein legend that he inexplicably butchered his wife and then committed suicide, he too decides to delve into the past . . . Meanwhile back at the house, Ann is beheaded and their estate agent, Laura is brutally stabbed.

When he returns with the full dossier of horrific facts about the Freudstein residence, Norman finds his distraught wife trying to open the door to the cellar where a terrified Bob is locked in. As he takes an axe to break down the door, a rotting, gnarled hand reaches for Bob and holds his head against it . . . Thus begins the tremendously exciting ending as each member of the family takes it in turn to fight for their lives.

Even though the film closes on a laclustre extra twist, there is no denying that this is Fulci at his most restrained and therefore most effective. While it contains his favoured motifs, young children witnessing disturbing events and his usual methods of murder

featuring yet another sharp instrument being forced into some part of the cranium, you do feel he is trying to make the effort to be less shallow in his characterisation. This is most noticeable with regard to young Bob. A lot of time is allocated to making you care about him and it pays off handsomely. Watching him trying to crawl through a cracked gravestone to escape the slowly approaching Dr Freudstein, one of the film's, and Fulci's, best images incidentally, is truly nerve-racking. The film also contains the usual red herrings that peter out, like the way people seem to recognise Norman and ask where they have seen him before. This amounts to absolutely nothing, although perhaps the original intention was to imply that Norman resembles Peterson in some way. There is also a certain amount of overstatement when we see May's premonition intercut with Ann's death. By the sme token it is surprising that Fulci didn't go to town on everything that is implied by the name Freudstein. That would haye been really interesting. Never mind, these are minor criticisms.

As for any impending cuts, there really is little to censor. Possibly minor excisions during Laura's murder where she bleeds to death in slowmotion, but that's all. As you can tell by that description, the Fulci stamp (accept no substitute), is very much in evidence. Obviously not being content with being called Italy's Master of Terror, he also wants to be their Alfred Hitchcock, as this is the second film in a row that has him in a small cameo role.

No, there really isn't any doubt about it, **The House by the Cemetary** will only ensure that more followers will join the Fulci Fan Club. And I for one am eagerly awaiting his next film, **The New York Ripper,** reportedly his biggest-budgeted and most technically adept film to date. ●

The House by the Cemetary (1981)

Starring Katherine McColl, Paolo Malco, Giovanni Frezza, Silvia Collatina and Dagmar Lassander. Directed by **Lucio Fulci.** Screenplay by **Dardano Sacchetti, Georgio Mariuzzo** and **Lucio Fulci.** Edited by **Vincenzo Tomassi.** Music by **Walter Rizzati,** Director of Photography **Sergio Salvati,** Produced by **Fabrizio De Angelis.**

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wolfgang reitherman

Interview by Richard Holliss

Of all the top men in the field of animation, one name that stands out for a lifetime's dedication to the art is that of Wolfgang Reitherman, the co-producer on the latest Disney feature-length animated film **The Fox and the Hound.**

Wolfgang Reitherman, affectionately referred to as "Woolie" by his friends, was born in Munich, Germany on June 26th 1909. His family moved to the United States a short while afterwards first settling in Kansas City, Missouri, and then Sierra Madre, California, where Reitherman grew up.

As a youth, he had an ambition to become a pilot and soon developed a love for flying. After leaving Pasadena Junior College, he took a job with Douglas Aircraft, but by 1931 had decided he would rather be an artist than an aircraft engineer. He enrolled at the Chouinard Art Institute, where he met an instructor who taught art lessons at the Disney studio. Through this association came the chance to work at the studio as an apprentice animator. This was to be the start of a brilliant career in film animation. His colleagues at the studio described him as having unlimited energy and dedication to his work. He was the only animator to become the sole director on a number of the studio's features.

Now at the age of 72, he is still undecided about retirement and on his attitude to animated films is still quoted as saying "You much keep your belief in the picture and your faith in yourself. For a picture to end up good, it must be treated like it was the very first one you ever made."

Starburst: *When you joined the Disney studio in the thirties, how long was the apprenticeship period?*

Reitherman: I was fortunate in that I didn't have to go through the so-called apprenticeship programme at all, which usually involved starting as an inbetweener's assistant and then working up to a fully-fledged animator. I spent a short time animating a Christmas cartoon, but within a week or two of that, I became associated with the Silly Symphony series.

Which of the Silly Symphony shorts did you work on first?

Funny Little Bunnies in 1934 was my first animation for the studio. It has this complicated sequence with bunnies pushing wheelbarrows full of easter eggs. I always remember having trouble with the eggs that were coming down a chute to fill the barrows. In animation, they tended to look as if they were going backwards instead of forwards. Although we managed to sort it out in the end.

Were you an animator on the academy award-winning Silly Symphony ***The Old Mill*** *in 1938?*

No, although I remember that it was a kind of testing ground for the multiplane camera. I did animate some scenes for the short **Musicland** (1935), a Silly Symphony which related the battle between two lands parted by a sea of discord, on kingdom was called Jazz and the other Symphony, it had overtones of the Romeo and Juliet story. Another short I helped out on was the Silly Symphony **Broken Toys.** (1935)

What was life like at the old Hyperion Studios in those early days?

It was rather cramped, so we all welcomed the success of **Snow White** and Walt's decision to move to bigger studios in Burbank.

Had Disney by this time given you any clue as to what your involvement would be on ***Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs?***

I was quite fortunate to work on **Snow White,** although my contribution wasn't all that much. I did the magic mirror sequence but Walt decided to place a distortion lense over the completed footage to give it more of an eerie appearance. At this time I was fact working more on the Goofy shorts than feature production. I think that I contributed something towards the development of that character. Art Babbit also did some animation on Goofy, but I kind of loosened it up a little more, making the Goof a more exuberant, active character. I'm not saying that it was any better that way although it did dictate the style of the character that went on to star in the highly successful How To . . . senes of shorts, directed mostly by Jack Kinney. The most famous being **How to Ride a Horse,** which animator Ward Kimball introduces to Robert Banchley in the film **The Reluctant Dragon.** (1941)

Which of the other animators helped on the Goofy cartoons?

Well there was a group of young animators at that time, mostly assistants who were keen to show their bosses what they were capable of and I would be in a position to hand out scenes for them to animate. It davaloped into a kind of Goofy group, but by this time I was working almost exclusively on features. John Sibley however did some great Goofy's and apart from directing, Kinney himself would add quite a lot of the story matarial. Some of the younger animators also contributed to that side of it.

Who dreamt up the idea to do a series of Goofy shorts in the first place?

Well, as a mattar of fact it was some of the younger guys that really started the whole Goofy scene. With **Goofy's Glider** in 1940, we were just having some fun, Walt kind of liked it and storyman John McLeish's narration was always very funny. In **Saludos Amigos** (1943) Kinney directed the Goofy short **El Gaucho Goofy,** on which I worked showing how the Argentine cowboys ast their meat and lasso their horses.

After ***Snow White*** *is it correct that your next feature length cartoon assignment involved creating the characters of Jiminy Cricket and Monstro the Whale for* ***Pinocchio?***

We all had a crack at Jiminy Cricket, although it was Ward Kimball who came up with the best design, it was Ward who davaloped it, I did the whale sequence, as I seemed to be the best choice at that time for handling mass and weight in my drawings. The whale was certainly big, powerful and dynamic, which is how Walt wanted it to look, although I also did Jiminy Cricket, so it was quite a contrast.

In ***Fantasia*** *you were animation supervisor on the Rite of Spring. As this sequence apart from the Pastoral Symphony was one of the film's most controversial sections, can you say whether or not the composer Igor Stravinsky was satisfied with the visual treatment that his music accompanied?*

Oh hell, that's hard to say. I think it was mostly down to Walt's ability to convince people that his ideas, however unusual, would work. I remember we used to have Christmas parties in those days, until

someone got his leg broken crossing the street, so we didn't bother anymore. Anyway I had a party going full swing in my room and I had a moviola with Stravinsky's music on it, and we were running it backwards. Actually it didn't sound all that good, it's so full of that discordant pulling and tugging, so we were trying to sing 'Jingle Bells' to it, when the door suddenly opened and Igor poked his head around the corner. I didn't know him too well, but I had been told that he didn't have much of a sense of humour and then Walt joined him at the door and so Igor finally says "Sounds pretty good backwards, too." So he must have had a little sense of humour I guess or else he really thought it did, I don't know.

*With the completion of **Fantasia**, what animation of yours appeared in **The Reluctant Dragon** in 1941?*

Was that after **Fantasia**? Well, maybe you're right, I guess that was just before we got involved in the war. I appeared in the live-action sequence with Robert Benchley looking around the studio. I was in an art class at the time drawing elephants, possibly for **Dumbo**. Almost everybody of fair stature in the studio appeared in that sequence, Walt even persuaded Alan Ladd to make a guest appearance as an animator. As far as the film was concerned, I did some animation on the dragon itself, if I remember rightly!

*When you returned to the studio after the war, in 1947, was your first film **Fun and Fancy Free**?*

What was **Fun and Fancy Free**?

The film about Mickey and the Beanstalk and Bongo the bear.

Oh yeah, okay. Come to think of it now, a lot of that was started before the war. It was supposed to be a sort of follow-up to **Dumbo**, a quickie, because we needed a feature picture for the box office. But it was delayed at the time and released later on.

*Then came **Ichabod and Mr Toad** in 1949?*

Yes, in that picture John Sibley and I animated the ride of the headless horseman. Actually I saw that again not so long ago and it was damn good, exciting with some funny surprises. At the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences, they did a retrospect on film of my career and I was surprised how good some of that stuff looked, mind you, although I was animation director on the Ichabod sequence, some of John's stuff was in it too and I mentioned this at the time. There were always other people and other talents added either with a pencil of their own, or they gave me ideas for my pencil, it isn't really fair to say it was all mine. That's the truth, I'm not being humble, and anyway it was a lot of fun.

*At this point in 1949, Disney decided to return to feature-length animated films with **Cinderella**. Was the build-up and enthusiasm for **Cinderella** comparable to the excitement generated in the studio during the making of **Snow White**?*

Well, **Cinderella** didn't have the opulent production values of **Pinocchio** for instance, which was rich in detail and technical achievement, but it was a delightful fairy tale, maybe one of the best. It certainly lacked the drama of **Snow White**, but there was a great deal of humour in the characters of the little mice Gus and Jaq. I remember that period well, it was a sort of a low for the studio. **Fun and Fancy Free** and the Ichabod stuff, they were just featurettes and weren't making the money, so Walt had been feeling reluctant to attempt another fairy tale. I think that was one of the reasons why he made **Fantasia**, he always wanted to do something different, not keep repeating the same thing over and over. This is a fact, you never know how you may get quoted, but to the best of my knowledge, RKO had offered him, well I guess something that would make him comfortable for the rest of his life. I had talked to him on several occasions. I would find him working on the train layout in his office — he had a mania for trains — and this usually meant, that he was unsure what decision to make and that was very unusual for Walt. We had a story meeting on **Cinderella** and although I hadn't worked on the story outline myself, I saw the presentation and felt there were a few things wrong with it. It seemed a little on the corny side, so afterwards I spoke to Walt, and persuaded him to go ahead with it. I felt the project was right and several years later, he remarked to me how appreciative he had been that someone at least had been enthusiastic about making it.

Did Walt Disney always value your opinion?

Yes, I think it was because I had been away, apart from a couple of the guys, the majority of the studio had been working throughout the war on shorts and training films, Walt always felt that I had an objective viewpoint and I think he valued that. **Cinderella** was certainly the key to get us started again in pictures.

*Is it true that Disney also felt unsettled about the next picture **Alice in Wonderland**?*

Well, **Alice** was another picture that didn't do too well, the first time round. **Cinderella** had been very successful and it didn't cost all that much to produce, it was relatively inexpansive. But the trouble with **Alice**, was that I don't think any of us really knew what the hell it was all about, and I'm not sure that many people do, well perhaps you do? I tried to read it and okay, maybe it contained political implications, but all that stuff was over my head. It wasn't during my lifetime and anyway I wasn't even interested in British Politics.

*I remember the fuss during the making of the **Winnie-the-Pooh** shorts over the use of American voices for the characters and the Disneyfication of Shepard's original illustrations. Did the same apply with **Alice**, and the Tenniel drawings?*

It wasn't really that so much, as the characters look great however you draw them, but there is a silliness about them and I think I reflect quite a few of our people, when I say that we didn't know what the hell these characters were trying to do. Sure the girl Alice is trying to get out of her dream, but it goes deeper than that so everybody tried to make his scene as imaginitive as possible and I think the continuity works well. Years later, of course, it has proved to be a picture that everyone wants to see, especially the college kids.

*After **Peter Pan**, Disney moved his animation features onto widescreen. Firstly in 1955 **Lady and the Tramp** in cinemascope and then in 1959 **Sleeping Beauty** in Technirama 70mm and stereophonic sound. Did you find that more and more of the production of these films was passed to yourself and other animators, with Disney himself becoming involved on the Disneyland project and of course television?*

Yes, he sort of felt that the team should work it out, and of course in the case of **Sleeping Beauty**, I think he was trying very hard not to make just another fairy tale. Instead he wanted to do something with beautiful music, Tchaikovsky's music and combine it with a style comprised of brilliant designs and colours

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that would match this classical theme. I wasn't animating at that time, but I know the goal was to make the human figure move authentically and with precision. The execution is absolutely marvellous and unlike later features, all the frames were individually inked by hand. I'm not saying we should never have made the picture, because I think it will be one of a kind and there will never be anything like it again. But the entertainment value wasn't really what an audience expects in a cartoon of this nature. Sure, the fairies were cute, apprehensive and with all the right emotions, but still it didn't seem to gel.

Perhaps audience's were apprehensive towards it in the same way that they treated ***Fantasia*** *twenty years before.*

But **Fantasia**, if you'll pardon the expression, had more balls. **Sleeping Beauty** to me anyway, didn't possess that dynamic quality it so needed. **Fantasia** had *Night on Bald Mountain*, and you know you can't do much better then that. It also had a lot more variety. Sure, the fight in **Sleeping Beauty** between the Prince and the dragon is chilling to watch and, thank god, it kind of woke the movie up, but in terms of entertainment value, a girl that follows a glowing sphere up some steps in a zombie-like state, does not cinematically grab you. I'm not really sure we got the most out of the scene. The audience knows that she will inevitably prick her finger, so we should have teased that thing e little, so the kids would shout out 'don't touch it, don't touch it'. Unfortunately, it never got to that point. Looking back I'm certainly glad I was part of it, although I got on it late.

If because of the lack of audience participation in ***Sleeping Beauty*** *it marked the end of an era at the studio, did you feel that the* ***101 Dalmations*** *in 1961 marked the beginning of a new one?*

Yes, I always enjoyed working on pictures that had more variety, emotions and humour coming from the screen. So **Dalmations** I thought was an excellent story. Unfortunately due to the failure at the box-office of **Sleeping Beauty**, we were forced to fight the buck in those days.

It was also at this time that you did a short called ***Goliath II****. What was the reason for that?*

Well, that was the first time thet we incorporated the xerox technique. A lot of discussion took place regarding the xerox method and quite a few people were worried that we had sacrificed the delicacy of the different lines, the lines of the face for example. It was however tremendously expensive to do it the old way, inking the cels by hand. The case for xerox concerns the fact that a lot of the artists like to see the animator's lines. If you are an artist, your hand is your means of expression and for a brief moment in time that line you have drawn is alive. In other words the line itself is a work of art. We often show pencil test sequences to people who have never seen them before and they are so intrigued with those lines making their own statements on the screen, that they tend to prefer the xerox method. Better or worse were stuck with it. On **The Fox and the Hound,** we used red xerox lines for the fox and this enabled us to integrate it more easily into the colour scheme and all this innovation was brought about thanks to a short about a baby elephant called **Goliath II.**

Did you therefore use the xerox method in ***The Sword in the Stone*** *and* ***The Jungle Book****?*

Yes, and it enabled us to produce both pictures within a reletively short period of time.

Apart from using xerox in ***The Rescuers****, you managed to try out different types of effects, I'm thinking particularly of the scenes of Orville the Albatross in flight. Was the character matted on to a background plate to give the impression of depth without having to resort to the multiplane camera?*

There certainly are a few of those effects in the later movies and of course we matted over haze and clouds to that sequence to enhance the feeling of flying. But these aren't great edvancements, it's still the same old solid style of film making that we've done for a long time.

Finally, what of the future. With new animators working at the studio, are you now hoping to retire or will you be persuaded to help with the next feature-length cartoon ***The Black Cauldron****?*

I don't know yet. I should go back around the first of the year, but you know, there is something to be said for being free. I've had a tremendous loyalty to thet studio so unless it's something really unusuel, I don't think that I shall be going back. ●

FILMOGRAPHY

Selected shorts end Silly Symphonies. 1933 to 1970.

Features:

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Animator.
Pinocchio. Animation Director.
Fantasia. Animation Supervision.
The Reluctant Dragon. Animator.
Dumbo. Animation Director.
Saludos Amigos. Animator.
Fun and Fancy Free. Animation Director.
Ichabod and Mr. Toad. Animation Director.
Cinderella. Animation Director.
Alica in Wonderland. Animation Director.
Peter Pan. Animation Director.
Lady and the Tramp. Animation Director.
Sleeping Beauty. Sequence Director.
101 Dalmations. Co-Director.
Sword in the Stone. Director.
The Jungle Book. Director.
The Aristocats. Director and Co-Producer.
Robin Hood. Director and Producer.
The Rescuers. Producer and Co-Director.
The Fox and the Hound. Co-Producer.

DOCTOR WHO

a pictorial preview

Nine months after the first transmission of the last of the Tom Baker Doctor Who adventures, *Logopolis*, the Doctor returns. But this season he will look a little different from his Baker incarnation. One of the reasons for this is that the good Doctor will be played by British actor Peter Davison, best-known for his comedy tv shows All Creatures Great and Small and Holding the Fort.

The first adventure of the newest Doctor will be titled *Castrovalva* and will feature the companions who accompanied Baker's Doctor in the adventure *Logopolis*. Tegan (Janet Fielding), Nyssa (Sarah Sutton) and Adric (Matthew Waterhouse). *Castrovalva* will be scripted by Christopher H. Bidmead, who was also responsible for *Logopolis*.

On this page we have included a selection of scenes from the forthcoming season, which begins during the week of 4th January, 1982. Other stories slated for the new season are *Four to Doomsday*, *Kinda*, *The Visitation*, *Black Orchid* (a two-parter) and *Earthshock*. And that's all the information we have at presstime.

JENNY AGUTTER

by John Brosnan

When he heerd that I was going to interview the delightful Jenny Agutter, who was in town to help promote **An American Werewolf in London**, a friend of mine asked if I would get her to autograph a picture of herself for him. I agreed, e bit reluctantly, but for various reesons the photograph didn't reach me until *after* the day of the interview and when I saw it I was relieved it had because it was a shot of Ms Agutter from *Logan's Run* and it seemed to consist of nothing but an expanse of naked thigh. All very nice, to be sure, but I could just imagine myself producing this picture and mumbling, "Oh, by the way (cough), would you mind autographing this thigh . . . I mean photograph? It's not for me, it's for a thigh of mine . . . I mean *friend* . . ."

So I was very glad to have been spared the ordeal of making such e request, especially since she struck me as being e rather liberated and highly intelligent young womén who probably now disapproves of such cheese-cake style publicity shots. Her liberated leenings were brought home to me shortly after we arrived at the hotel for the interview when I overheard her end our own liberated photographer Joyce Agee enimetedly discussing ERA (the Equal Rights Amendment which is, justifiably, a big issue emong feminists in America these days). In fact, I was feeling so intimidated efter that I even kept away from e subject I had intended to touch on during the interview—her ettitude to doing nude scenes in movies (such es the one in **American Werewolf**). Oh well, some other thigh perhaps . . . I mean *time* . . .

Jenny Agutter has been working in the film industry for quite e long time now—since the age of 12, in fact, when she was chosen to star in a Disney picture called **Ballerina** (she hed been trained as a ballet dencer from the age of 9, which explains those thighs . . .). Thet same year, 1964, she also appeered in **East of Sudan**, playing e little Arab girl, e movie produced by none other then Charles H. Schneer. Other movies end tv work followed but probably the most important role of her teenage yeers was in Nicolas Roeg's film **Walkabout** made in 1969. Then came **The Railway Children** in 1970 (she hed earlier appeered in the tv version of the story) end a further succession of parts in British tv end stage pleys until 1975 when she made her breek-through into Hollywood with a starring role in **Logan's Run**.

Her choice of ecting essignments since then hes been eclectic, ranging from e guest-starring role in **The Six Million Dollar Man** to playing Hedda Gabler on the London stege in 1980. Her film work has included **Equus**, which won her e BAFTA award in 1976, **Sweet William**, based on e Beryl Bainbridge novel, in 1978 end, most recently, **An American Werewolf in London** in which she played the nurse, Alex, who befriends (and beloves) the American protagonist.

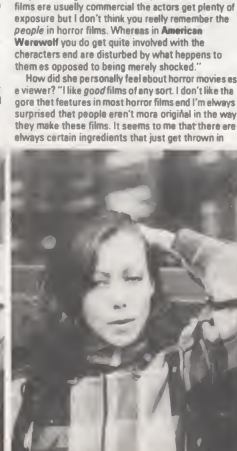
So how did e nice English girl like her come to get mixed up with the likes of werewolves, rotting corpses and John Landis? "Well," she explained, "I'd known John for some time. A Los Angeles friend introduced me to him back when he was making **Kentucky Friend Movie** end he was elways talking about this werewolf film he intended to make. He'd say to me, "I want you in it!" but it never seemed es if it was going to heppen. But then after **The Blues Brothers** he meneged to get the project off the ground. I didn't get involved until November of 1980 when he'd got the money together and had a finished script for me to reed. He'd described the story to me before but not in greet deteil and my feelings were: "Well, it sounds rether *weird* to me . . ." Then I reed it and I thought it was extremely funny and frightening though I also thought it was going to be extremely difficult to do without it becoming camp. But I knew John would probably be able to pull it off because he has such e greet knowledge of film end e great enthusiesm for the horror genre—he knows every horror film that hes ever been made—and he knows comedy. So I said, "Yes, lovely . . . I'll do it!"

I asked her about eppearing in horror films in general·"It hes to be something speciel like **American Werewolf** because generally they're not very rewerding roles. You can say thet because horror films are usually commercial the actors get plenty of exposure but I don't think you really remember the *people* in horror films. Whereas in **American Werewolf** you do get quite involved with the characters end are disturbed by what happens to them es opposed to being merely shocked."

How did she personally feel about horror movies es e viewer? "I like *good* films of any sort. I don't like the gore that features in most horror films and I'm always surprised that people eren't more original in the way they make these films. It seems to me that there are always certain ingredients that just get thrown in every time. And I certainly don't like films that victimise women, like **Halloween** and **Tattoo** . . . They're fighting because it *is* violence against women but it's sort of eccepted by everyone. But **American Werewolf** definitely isn't thet sort of film—the character I play is very capable and down-to-earth and she makes her own decisions about her life. And that's wonderful to see, not just in a horror film but *any* film. Even today with the Women's Movement and everything women in films are still usually portrayed as an ornament to the man, or as a Women's Libber type which gets boring—but never simply es a person getting down to a job or just being *interesting* in some way . . ."

After assuring Ms Agutter that I was a frequent campaigner for women's rights in the pages of **Starburst** I then asked if she had made many suggestions about the character of the nurse, Alex. "Not really because her character was very well-conceived in the finished screenplay and I *was* surprised because, of course, John isn't English. The only thing you might quarrel about is whether a nurse could afford to live in a flat like that on her own. But I was eble to come to terms with that in my own mind after I went to a hospital for about a week to get the specifics right about doing things as a nurse. The one thing that was made very cleer to me during that week was that nursing was obviously a vocation—nobody does it for the money because there hardly *is* any—and also that there era many different types among the nurses, ranging from cockneys to some who are frightfully posh. So I decided Alex was obviously from a well-off family who had bought her this big flat and helped her out financially. But the flet *is* big for English standards, I know, however you need a lot of space to film in . . ."

I asked her how long the shooting schedule had been. "It was actually rather reasonable. About 9 weeks—a good length of time for a film because it means you keep going and don't lose perspective of what you're doing. The rate of filming wes about 2 minutes every dey which is very good. The major problem we had was that it was ell besically location shooting, much of it and around London and unlike American cities you don't get permission to shoot in London. All you get is: 'Okay, if you cause any hazards or stop traffic you'll be arrested,' as Esther Rantzen found out. So there was always the threet hanging►



over us that John would be taken away and arrested in the middle of a scene. But we managed, and it was extraordinary really because a lot of the stuff was literally a case of jumping out of taxis and grabbing shots just as passers-by started to turn their heads to look at these crazy actors running up and down the streets screaming . . . then it was back into the taxis.

"The Piccadilly Circus sequence was very much a case of shooting on the run. John got the usual warning from the police about being arrested if he stopped the traffic but he told them he would do it without upsetting any traffic . . . and he did. The police were apparently very impressed with his methods. He shot it at 3 am in the morning and what he did was put some film unit cars in front of the traffic that went very slowly, creating a gap in the traffic flow. And by the time these cars reached the Circus the shooting had been completed . . .

"And we were very lucky with the Trafalgar Square sequence because usually the Square is crowded with people, especially on a Sunday which is when we shot there, however it happened to be pouring with rain—it absolutely poured—and nobody came out. This was very fortunate for us because we had this camera track all the way across from one corner of the Square to the other so it could all be done in one shot . . ."

Did she, I wondered, prefer working in England to America? "I'm always happy to be working here because I enjoy London and also the English film crews seem much closer in a way. But remember that really the only film I've made in America was **Logan's Run** for MGM and that was such a big production that you weren't involved with the crew in any way. You tend to get out off in pictures that big. There were about 8 different sound stages being worked on at any one time and that went on for about 3 to 4 months and one tended to lose the idea of what it was we were making. We shot such tiny sections at a time—you came on and did your bit on some huge set and then went back to your dressing room and had a long wait until they were ready for you again. I wasn't exactly being stretched as an actress . . .

"On the other hand it was fun to work on such amazing sets and we got to play with a lot of mechanical toys and props like those little trains we rode around on, and it was fun filming in those futuristic buildings in Dallas and Fort Worth, though a lot of the time we were working with blue screens and having to react to wonderful scenery that wasn't there . . ."

Something that had puzzled me about **Logan's Run** was why two British stars had been chosen for the lead roles. "You may well ask. I think it was because the director, Michael Anderson, is English and was determined that Michael York should play the lead. He'd worked with Michael before and wanted someone who not only appeers to be eternally young but also has stature as an actor. So having cast Michael he had to find someone who was right to play opposite him but an actress who was typically American would have clashed—not so much because of accents but because of acting styles—and I guess that's why I got the part. And there was Peter Ustinov as well—all of us Britishers ending up in Washington together . . ."

Mention of Michael Anderson reminded me that she had made another film with him—the Milton Subotsky horror movie **Dominique** in 1977. "Yes, I did it because I enjoy working with Michael. It was totally different to **Logan's Run**—it was shot very fast and involved only a small team as opposed to a giant crew. It was much more of an actors' film though, like **Logan's Run**, it was shot almost entirely in a studio—at Shepperton. I would describe it as a psychic thriller rather than a horror film but I'm not sure it worked. It didn't quite hold, in my opinion . . .

"Obviously with all films you go into them very enthusiastically, saying they're going to be great and everything but you never *really* know how they're going to work out and often during the editing, and the re-editing, they lose their way. For example, this movie I made in Australia last year called **The Survivor**—I no longer know what it's supposed to be about. When we were *making it* I knew very well what we were trying to make—like **Dominique** it was

Above: *Jenny Agutter as Alex in* **American Werewolf in London**. Below: *Jenny Agutter with* **American Werewolf** *director John Landis.*

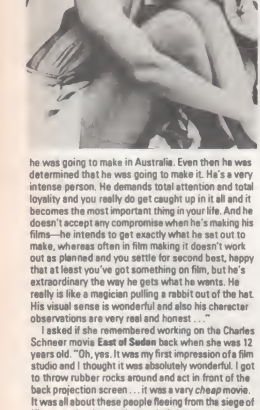
supposed to be a psychic thriller. It was not quite a Gothic tale but it was a story about a plane crash and the events that take place afterwards. It was set up in such a way, though, that at the end of the picture you're not sure if the plane has crashed or is about to because it seems as if the whole thing is someone's premonition. I play a girl in it, who was in fact a *man* in the book, called Hobbs who is psychic. She is trying to sort out what it is that's gone wrong, which has something to do with the pilot who survived the crash. The trouble is that since I left Australia the ending has been re-edited so that it comes out differently. I haven't seen the completed picture so I don't know how it ends now. And I think they've had trouble releasing it . . ."

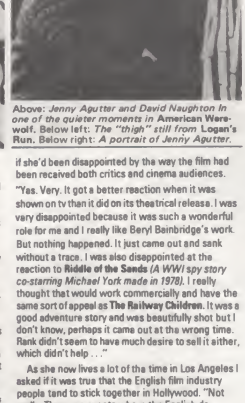
The Survivor was the second film she had made in Australia—the first being **Walkabout**—and I asked if she liked working there. "It's a funny thing about Australia—you either love it or you hate it, and I love it. I love it to the point of tending not to worry about the elements when I'm filming out there. And the elements are the biggest problem about filming in Australia because you can get caught in these extraordinary erees where you don't know whether it's going to rain or blaze with sunshine from one moment to the next. While making **Walkabout** we were shooting in Arnhem Land which is right up in the Northern Territories. It was coming into the monsoon seeson and if the rain had started it was very likely the place would have flooded and we'd have been completely cut off. It's a very strange area . . .

"**Walkabout** involved a long shoot. We were in Australia for nearly 4 months, travelling all over the place and losing about 6 jeeps in the process. We only had a small unit and it was very hard work but I really fell in love with the country. It's so beautiful."

Deciding not to mention that I was a product of that beautiful country, so as not to shatter her illusions about the place, I then asked her about Nicholas Roeg, the director of **Walkabout**—"He's rather mysterious. I always see him es a magician figure, someone who can produce things out of thin air. He creates a working atmosphere that is different to any other director's. Looking back now to the filming of **Walkabout** it's difficult to determine when we were filming and when we weren't because it's all become merged into a single experience that I actually *lived* through . . ."

I asked if working with Roeg on the picture had taught her much as an actress. "In terms of film making it was an education, and I learned to be in touch *emotionally* with things more, but I didn't learn a great deal about acting craft. Remember I was only 16 when I did it so in a way I wasn't really aware of what it was Nic Roeg was making or how extraordinary it was. I just remember that he was a very enthusiastic gentleman . . . who I first met when I was 14. That was when he told me about this picture





Above: *Jenny Agutter and David Naughton in one of the quieter moments in* **American Werewolf.** Below left: *The "thigh" still from* **Logan's Run.** Below right: *A portrait of Jenny Agutter.*

he was going to make in Australia. Even then he was determined that he was going to make it. He's a very intense person. He demands total attention and total loyalty and you really do get caught up in it all and it becomes the most important thing in your life. And he doesn't accept any compromise when he's making his films—he intends to get exactly what he set out to make, whereas often in film making it doesn't work out as planned and you settle for second best, happy that at least you've got something on film, but he's extraordinary the way he gets what he wants. He really is like a magician pulling a rabbit out of the hat. His visual sense is wonderful and also his character observations are very real and honest . . ."

I asked if she remembered working on the Charles Schneer movie **East of Sudan** back when she was 12 years old. "Oh, yes. It was my first impression of a film studio and I thought it was absolutely wonderful. I got to throw rubber rocks around and act in front of the back projection screen . . . it was a very *cheap* movie. It was all about these people fleeing from the siege of Khartoum but it was shot entirely in the studio at Shepperton. The 'natives', who didn't have much to wear, were always freezing. I remember the director, Nathan Juran, saying, 'You look over here and you see a giraffe . . .' and he'd hold his *hat* up for the giraffe."

I mentioned that I'd been very impressed with her performance in **Sweet William,** which she made in 1978 with American actor Sam Waterston, and asked if she'd been disappointed by the way the film had been received both critics and cinema audiences.

"Yes. Very. It got a better reaction when it was shown on tv than it did on its theatrical release. I was very disappointed because it was such a wonderful role for me and I really like Beryl Bainbridge's work. But nothing happened. It just came out and sank without a trace. I was also disappointed at the reaction to **Riddle of the Sands** *(A WWI spy story co-starring Michael York made in 1978).* I really thought that would work commercially and have the same sort of appeal as **The Railway Children.** It was a good adventure story and was beautifully shot but I don't know, perhaps it came out at the wrong time. Rank didn't seem to have much desire to sell it either, which didn't help . . ."

As she now lives a lot of the time in Los Angeles I asked if it was true that the English film industry people tend to stick together in Hollywood. "Not really. There are events where the English do congregate together and, of course, the media picks up on that. But on the whole I come across English film people as much as I do the American film people, which is usually just at screenings or whatever. I know Alan Parker painted a different picture recently—all the English expatriates playing cricket together and worrying about the state of the film industry and that sort of thing but I don't find it that way. Of course everyone is worried about the industry at the moment. It's very, very bad. There is so little production going on right now. It's very peculiar."

Was it a handicap being an English actress in Hollywood, I asked. Did the Americans usually only choose her to play English characters? "Yes, a lot of the time but I *am* English and that is my way of expressing myself as an actress. I have played Americans but it's always difficult to convince producers and directors you can do it. I play an American in a Disney picture I did last year called **Amy.** It's set in Boston at the turn of the century and I play a young woman who teaches deaf children to lip read . . . and I played an American scientist once in an episode of **The Six Million Dollar Man . . ."**

I asked how that part had come about. "Well, it was in 1977 during the period when I was trying to get my Green Card and I couldn't leave America. I really couldn't do very much at all so when I was offered both the *Six Million Dollar* part and a tv special I considered them seriously. The script of the special was so much rubbish I couldn't believe it but the *Six Million Dollar* episode was a two-parter to start a new series and it seemed quite a good story. So I went along to meet the producers and they were very pleasant and appeared to care about the project so I agreed to do it . . ."

"It was my first experience at episodic television and *never* again. It was just terrible. I had the worst experience of my life on that. They just shot *anything*—nobody cared less what happened. If anything went wrong you'd have to plead to be allowed to do it again. The young man who was directing it, and I can't remember his name, was basically just a gofer and showed no care at all. He was just no good. We shot very fast—I think we did the two hours or whatever in just four weeks—and the script kept changing. It changed every week and I presumed they were carefully thought out changes so I would go up to him and say, 'You know the change that happened on page so and so?' And he would say, 'Change? What change? Has something been changed?' He had no idea what you were supposed to be doing and any questions about your character were a waste of time. All you'd get from him was, 'Well, I don't know about the characters . . . I'm just trying to shoot the thing . . .' Because it was a tv series with an established audience he couldn't care less about it, which was a shame because I think the producers really did care about what they were doing . . ."

But she worked on another American tv series after that—something called **Beulah Land** which I had to admit I'd never heard of, much less seen. "It was a sort of tatty **Gone With the Wind** but it did quite well, actually. The reviewers rather liked it. But it was a mini-series, not an ordinary tv series, and they spent a lot of time on it. It was more like doing a film so I didn't mind working on it. And the role I was offered was very unusual to the type of roles I usually get. She was a hooker and a rather interesting character to do . . ."

I asked if she tended to be typecast and if her role as an innocent young girl in **The Railway Children** continued to cast any shadow on her career even now. "One is always worried about being typecast because of the nature of the film industry and the fact that producers find it easier to keep you in a pigeon hole but I don't think **The Railway Children** affects my career now in any way. It is still remembered by a lot of people though, which is nice . . ."

And so the interview came to an end with me feeling relieved that it hadn't been marred by any of the embarrassing incidents that had been such a feature of my last interview with a celebrity (see the interview with Richard Donner in **Starburst 35**), but no sooner had I switched the tape recorder off and stood up to leave then I hit my head a resounding bang on a low-hanging metal lampshade. As I staggered about clutching my head I could see that Ms Aggutter was torn between the desire to put into practice some of the skills she'd learnt while playing a nurse and collapsing into helpless mirth. She chose the latter course of action.

Always leave them laughing, that's my motto. ●

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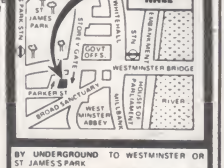

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LADY STAY DEAD

Review by Alan Jones

Mad Max, Harlequin, The Cars that Ate Paris—all fine movies from the Australian cinema: there has to be another side to the coin and unfortunately **Lady Stay Dead** is it.

On the strength of this film you'd think that Terry Bourke was a hack director but this isn't the case at all. Two of his previous fantasy efforts proved that. One he co-directed with Rod Hay, the intriguing **Inn of the Damned**, the other was **Night of Fear**, which was a 70 minute non-dialogue picture that interestingly almost covered the same ground as **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** but just pre-dates it. **Lady Stay Dead** however has the dice loaded against it from the start with its now over familiar tale of an obnoxious psychopath terrorising a young woman in a deserted house. The psychopath in this instance is Gordon Mason (Chard Hayward), who is in love with his employer, a pop singer called Marie Colby (Deborah Coulls). She treats him like the garbage he collects after one of her numerous photographic sessions and one day he goes berserk, rapes her and drowns her in her aquarium. As he is trying to dispose of the body, Marie's sister, Jenny Nolan (Louise Howitt), arrives from the airport and presents Gordon with the problem of what to do with her as well. The film then degenerates even more than you could possibly imagine into a routine grab and stab with Jenny aided by two police officers who arrive on the scene. Garden shears, a chainsaw and petrol bombs are all used in this assault but as there hasn't been any suspense up to this point anyway, why should the ending by any different? And sure enough the climax comprises of an hysterical shouting match and one breathtakingly obvious twist after another. All this is no substitute for lack of action and the one real shock is the realisation that the title has nothing to do with the film at all! Terry Bourke told me that the title **Lady Stay Dead** was one of 47 test marketed in New York with apparently a 95% favourable response. The fact that is is meaningless and misleading in context doesn't matter—it's a *good* title! Bourke also told me that the film was shot in five weeks, cost £300,000 and used all untried actors apart from one police officer played by Roger Ward, (the bald-headed Fifi in **Mad Max**). The latter point is all too apparent.

The banal script isn't helped at all by the very bad acting on show here, especially by Chard Hayward in the pivotal role as Gordon. The part is seriously underwritten, I know, but the Welsh actor just isn't the complex character needed to make the thin story work. This lack of depth makes the crude sex scenes even more distasteful and sleazier than they need be.

Apart from a couple of inventive camera angles, one through a telephone dial, another following a rolling petrol bomb, the film is totally devoid of style. Two good shots do not a worthwhile film make and I'm sorry to say that from everybody's point of view, **Lady Stay Dead** should do just that. Stay dead. ●

WILLIAM CASTLE

Feature by Arthur Ellis

"What's a Tingler look like?"

"Sort of like a lobster but flat, and instead of claws it has long slimy feelers."

After the theatrical successes of **Macabre** and **The House on Haunted Hill**, William Castle moved back onto the Columbia lot for his next film, but with his own independant production company, thus securing a healthy degree of autonomy.

Taken aback and with eyebrows raised, Columbia nevertheless financed the research and underwrote the design for the equipment needed to exploit Castle's third horror foray, **The Tingler**, made in 1959. With Vincent Price back in action as an enthused medical researcher the story, loosely, concerns Price's theory that in each of us all there exists a Tingler, to be located at the base of the spine. This Tingler generates its state of being through absorbing the fears and shocks of each individual. However the act of screaming and the audible release of one's fright cancels out the nourishment needed for the Tingler to manifest itself in any larger, more offensive way. Thus the Tingler and man live together in harmless, ignorant bliss.

Throw in a deaf and dumb female who *can't* release her anxiety vocally, thereby feeding her Tingler to immense proportions, and there's your story.

To Castle each storyline was concocted and contrived soley to maximise audience reaction, to manipulate their fears. Any "discussion" of 20th century attitudes, the use of metaphor and allegory and the like didn't seem to have a place in these early films. They were, superficially, what they were. But in spite, or because of this outwardly superficial approach Castle's *ideas* were imbued with a sense of ethos and intelligence, born out of his subconscious.

Where certain directors and producers would discuss a story's theme and complexities to death before or during the shooting of their films, Castle shot first and then *read* what they were about later.

There was a good buzz in the theatres where **The Tingler** played. The seats had literally been wired up so as to charge each patrons rear end with enough electricity to get them twitching during the right (sometimes the wrong) moments of the film. Castle himself estimated that he'd buzzed in excess of 20 million backsides, although this optimistic figure has to be taken with a fistful of salt. Dona Holloway, Castle's associate producer, christened the gimmick "Percepto".

Above: *A scene from the 1961 Castle offering* **(Mr) Sardonicus,** Right: *The British poster from the 1959 horror movie* **The Tingler,** *which starred Vincent Price and concerned the antics of a nasty crab-like creature called, surprise, a tingler.* Below right: *The image which was used on many posters to signify to horror fans that the movie in question was spawned by the great William Castle.*

At **The Tingler's** climax, set conveniently inside a silent movie theatre the Tingler itself is seen crawling behind the cinema screen, and it was at this point that Vincent Price's voiceover echoed through the auditorium, warning people that the Tingler had actually broken loose (from the film!) and that the only way to exorcise it was to scream like hell. These announcements were deleted for the English release.

The now legendary "Fright Break" was the highlight of perhaps Castle's most remembered movie as a director, **Homicidal**. A clock in the corner of frame, a countdown by Castle himself and a heavy duty blonde who's sexual denomination is uncertain, even at the film's close.

In the same way that **Dressed to Kill** is affectionately beholding to **Psycho** and **Homicidal**, the latter was initially conceived as a cash in as well as, I suspect, a homage to the Hitchcock classic.

The knife and Drag genre was born . . . and consolidated.

Although unashamedly derivative, **Homicidal** can still hold its own as an exercise in almost brilliant cinema theatrics and audience manipulation. Indeed, during the period of its release in America Time Magazine placed **Homicidal** higher in its yearly top 10 than it had **Psycho** the previous year, something which Castle was justly proud of. The plot, in one clipped stroke features a psychopathic transvestite who picks up men in bars and fillets them accordingly. There's a crippled matron in there somewhere as well, who's fate is decapitation. Preceding the film's final sequence (the decapitation) Castle's voice-over would announce the offer of a ticket refund for any members of the audience who were too frightened to take the unspeakable horrors about to unfold on screen.

At the previews in Ohio the majority of the audience took Castle at his word and went running back to the paydesk in demand of their refund, and so something had to be thought of to combat the effects of the "money back guarantee" publicity. The angle wasn't worth dropping because it was getting people into the cinema, even if it was just to taste the novelty of getting their money back.

Castle fought and won the issue by using a rather unfair psychological ploy on the audience. Coward's Corner.

A yellow light bathed the area around the box office and a blood pressure kit sat with a nurse at a nearby table. A recorded message on a loop ran continuously: "These cowards are too frightened to see the end of **Homicidal**! Watch them shiver in the coward's corner . . . coward . . . coward . . . coward."

If you wanted your money back you had to become a side show to get it. The final insult for anyone braving the glare and derision from the audience queuing for the next

programme was that each unsatisfied customer had to sign a yellow card which read: "I am an uncertified coward". Just for the record Castle considers **Homicidal** the most original of his films and the one he had the most fun making.

Sandwiched between **Homicidal** and **The Tingler** came **13 Ghosts.** This featured Illusion-O and ghost viewers (aka cardboard glasses). However **Sardonicus** (prefixed in the States by "Mr"), which was set in England but made in Hollywood in 1961, is much more interesting (simply because I haven't seen **13 Ghosts.**!)

Whilst stealing from his father's grave Sardonicus's face is set like cement in a mask of frozen immobility, sporting—henceforth throughout the entire film—an intense, wide grin and, as I recall, a pretty devastating image. The grin was a mask that Guy Rolfe, who played the title character, had to wear painfully through the shooting. There were other problems, like the leeches which Castle originally insisted on being the genuine article, until he tried one on and found it too tight a fit. **Sardonicus** received flak from Columbia, the distributors, who strongly objected to the film's ending as being unacceptable for an audience. In Castle's version **Sardonicus** dies most agonisingly from starvation, unable to eat or drink due to being tight lipped, and Columbia wanted, to use Castle's own word, a more *palatable* ending for theatergoers.

To Castle the challenge provided him with one of his best (yet strangely less remembered) gimmicks. The Punishment Poll.

The question was whether to let Sardonicus live or let him die. So he let the audience decide.

Near to the end of the film Castle appeared on screen and "asked" the audience how *they* felt about Sardonicus. Was he just a bad guy or was he worth saving? Then, still on screen, he began counting the number of thumbs down against the number of thumbs up. The actual count was done by the theater manager. The verdict of the audiences was invariably a thumbs down, and Sardonicus died, but the alternative ending was always laced up and ready to go if the situation required it.

The whole theater became almost like a gladiatorial party and this was exploited via tannoy announcements that snidely asked whether you were man enough to make life or death decisions.

In 1967 Castle decided to make **Rosemary's Baby**, not a life or death decision perhaps but one that effectively ended his career, introducing the world to a new breed of horror film and introducing himself to an audience he couldn't really understand. ●

THE SECRET OF NIMH

Feature by Richard Holliss

With the recent spate of feature-length animated films: **Heavy Metal**, **American Pop**, **The Fox and The Hound** etc. It is pleasing to hear that United Artists are now announcing a new film from Don Bluth Productions, **The Secret of NIMH** based on the book *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* by Robert C. O'Brien.

O'Brien who was born in Brooklyn, New York was for a short period, editor of *Newsweek* and at the time of his death in 1973 had written four major novels, including *Mrs Frisby*. The latter won the 1972 John Newbery Medal, awarded to writers of literature by the American Library Association. The story itself although written for children combines the classic animal tale with a realism similar in style to the books of Richard Adams. One of which, *Watership Down*, has already been made into a successful feature-length cartoon.

The film which is due for release in 1982 is the first solo venture for Don Bluth and his newly formed company, Don Bluth Productions. Bluth left the Disney studios in 1979 encouraging a group of fellow animators to do likewise. Evidently he felt there was a restriction of artistic freedom and claimed his resignation was due to creative differences.

Accompanied by ex-Disney staff members, Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy, the first film they set about producing was **Banjo, the Woodpile Cat**, a half hour television special made with their own money. With sixteen more artists also from Disney, they moved into the new Studio City offices and formed an exclusive association with Aurora Productions. This was a company formed in 1978 by two former Disney executives Rich Irvine and James L. Stewart. Irvine had been the President of Walt Disney Educational Media Company which supervises non-theatrical distribution of Disney productions and, Stewart, an Administrative Assistant to the President of Walt Disney Productions.

In early 1980, Bluth and his team animated a two-minute sequence for Universal's **Xanadu** movie starring Olivia Newton John. This short insert received much critical acclaim, so Bluth expressed a wish to return to the Disney style of animation so prevalent throughout the early forties. His company, he decided had no time for limited animation techniques, preferring, instead to lavish time, money and expert draughtsmenship on future projects.

Norbert Auerbach, the President and Chief Executive Officer of United Artists expressed great delight at the partnership of his company and Don Bluth Productions, "The artists and animators who are the heart and soul of this bright new studio remind me of the pioneers of our industry: creative, dedicated and passionate about their craft. I look forward to a long and happy association with them".

Don Bluth had been a member of the Animation Review Board at Walt Disney Productions. After a short spell animating on **Sleeping Beauty** in the mid-fifties, he left the studio in 1957. He joined the Filmation Studios in Hollywood as a layout man in 1967, but left to rejoin Disney in 1971 under their new training programme. This had been set up by the veteran Disney animators many who were nearing retirement age to introduce new blood into the studio. Working as an animator on **Robin Hood** in 1973 and **Winnie-the-Pooh and Tigger Too** in 1974, Bluth was elevated to the position of directing animator on **The Rescuers** in 1977 and director of animation on **Pete's Dragon**. Apart from producing and directing the cartoon featurette **The Small One** in 1978, his last film for Disney was preliminary animation on **The Fox and The Hound**.

Gary Goldman joined Disney's in 1972 assisting veteran animator Frank Thomas on **Robin Hood**, he also on **The Rescuers**, **Pete's Dragon** and **The Small One**.

John Pomeroy came to Disney in 1973 as a trainee and so impressed his employers that he found himself animating on **The Rescuers** within the space of six months. His film credits also include **Pete's Dragon** and **The Small One**.

One effects animator that Bluth managed to entice from the Disney studio was Dorse Lanpher, who had worked extensively on the fifties animated featurettes including **Our Friend the Atom**, **Paul Bunyon** and **Mars and Beyond** for Ward Kimball. His feature work included **Sleeping Beauty**, **101 Dalmations** and **The Sword in the Stone**. Effects work included **The Rescuers**, **Pete's Dragon** and **The Black Hole**.

The idea to film the NIMH story came about when a highly respected storyman suggested to Bluth, Goldman and Pomeroy that they read O'Brien's novel. All three loved the book, immediately seeking financial backing. Certainly the story is the perfect choice for an animated feature. Briefly it concerns Mrs Frisby—changed to Mrs Brisby for the film—a timid widow field-mouse, whose home is threatened by Farmer Fitzgibbons spring ploughing. On friend's advice, she consults the Great Owl for his invaluable help in such matters. It is he who recommends a visit to the rats of NIMH. But unfortunately the rats themselves as with the rabbits of *Watership Down*, are having a few problems of their own. One interesting aspect of the story concerns the fact that the rats are a super breed, dedicated to helping others morally and spiritually, brought about by experiments carried out on them at a top secret laboratory from which they had managed to escape. It is certainly a film for a modern generation of young cinema-goers.

In true Disney fashion, some famous personalities have been assembled by Bluth to speak for the animated characters, amongst them, actress and comedienne Hermione Baddeley, veteran actor John Carradine, Mel Brooks protégé Dom Deluise, and English classical actor Derek Jacobi. Actress Elizabeth Hartman supplies the voice of Mrs Brisby.

The film incorporates an amazing array of special effects without sacrificing the strong storyline. With Bluth's experience at the Disney studio, his team are able to bestow on the film production values that seem to have vanished over the years with the producers of independent animated films.

Bluth feels that the art of classic animation has been waning since Walt Disney died in 1966. So with a dedication to the project, seldom seen since the heyday of Disney animation, the staff of fifty-five artists, animators, camera operators, editors and technicians are hoping to make **The Secret of NIMH** a film that will not easily be rivalled by other modern animation companies.

The shooting schedule has been spread over a period of thirty months, although unlike animators of television cartoons who churn out 12,000 feet of film a year, Bluth and his team because of their incredible attention to detail, will spend a total of almost three years producing a mere 6,000 feet of film. Apart from 1,000 background paintings, the special effects animators have produced everything from snowflakes to cobwebs. Bluth even incorporated two massive multiplane cameras to achieve the desired effect.

Looking at the artwork for the film, it has a style and richness sadly lacking in other contemporary animated features. With the exception of Disney, when so many animation producers promise to deliver the goods but never do, it is rewarding to come across artists such as Bluth, Goldman and Pomeroy, who really care about the state of the art, and **The Secret of NIMH**, will I'm sure be welcomed by cinema audiences and film buffs alike when it finally reaches our screens during the summer of 1982.

DRAGONSLAYER

Feature by Frances Lynn

Above: *Galen (Peter MacNicol) warily awaits the appearance of the dragon after he invades its subterranean lair.* Right: *The Dragon Vermithrax Pejorative soars majestically above the surface of the lake.* Far right above: *Galen tries all too quickly to step into the shoes of his master.* Far right below: *A grisly scene in which the baby dragons feast on the still warm corpse of their final victim.* Bottom row, left to right: *Valerian (Caitlin Clarke) leads a delegation from the village across the barren wastes near the dragon's lair. Sir Ralph Richardson is Ulrich, last of the great magicians. Peter MacNicol plays Galen, the sorcerer's apprentice who must slay a dragon. Captain of the King's guard, Tyrian (John Hallam), Galen spears one of the dragon's devilish offspring.*

DRAGONSLAYER is Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins' 14th screenplay, their first success being **The Sugarland Express**, directed by Steven Spielberg. Making their debuts as producer and director in their last production, **Corvette Summer**, Barwood and Robbins are repeating their successful formula as writers, producer and director on **Dragonslayer**.

"We have always been fascinated by science fiction, fantasy and horror," they say, "we've written several screenplays exploring these genres, but **Dragonslayer** is the first one to get made into a movie in ten years of working together."

Although the film bombed in America, it was probably more due to the mishandling of the promotional campaign by Paramount (who were facing such movies as **Raiders of the Lost Ark** and **Clash of the Titans** as competitors) than to any lack of quality in the film.

With a 14 million dollar budget, filmed at London's Pinewood Studios and on location, **Dragonslayer** is a visually stunning and sensationally atmospheric fairy tale. ►

Barwood and Robbins contrived that the origins of **Dragonslayer** were in the Sorcerer's Apprentice sequence from the earlier Disney film **Fantasia**. They were both raised on Walt Disney movies and never got over them. Eventually they became curious about George and Dragon and began to research the myths in the children's library. Instead of using traditional medieval conceptions like knights in shining armour, pennants streaming in the breeze and ladies with diaphanous veils waving from turretted castles, they have created a strange world steeped in superstition where clothes and manners of the people are rough, their homes and villages primitive, so that the idea of magic is a natural part of their existence.

Sir Ralph Richardson plays an old wizard, Ulrich, who is the last of the [illegible] foretelling his own death, he confides his apprentice, Galen, played by newcomer [illegible]. Besides [illegible] Galen is far [illegible] Not only is the young but his powers are weak and his training incomplete.

A young boy named Valentine, played by another newcomer Lloyd Clarke, leaves [illegible] with a message for the wizard Ulrich for help.

A monstrous dragon is ravaging their country, and their king has been driven into a damnable pact, sacrificing virgins to keep it from destroying their crops and villages.

It is Galen who is left to destroy the dragon, and what follows is a wonderful story, consisting of feats of magic, high adventure, a truly terrifying dragon, mystery, thrills and chills.

Although Sir Ralph Richardson is the only big star in **Dragonslayer**, Barwood and Robbins had deliberately written a movie that would not depend solely on star names, but would require first class actors, Peter MacNicol who was born in Texas arrived in New York from the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis the day before he was due to audition for another film and met director Matthew Robbins in the waiting room of his agent's office. Robbins immediately thought him perfect for the part of the young apprentice, and was delighted to discover he was a skilled rider, as one of Galen's many talent is riding bareback.

Although Barwood and Robbins found their male lead easily enough, they discovered filling the role of Valerian was a tough one.

Caitlin Clarke, a graduate of Yale's Drama school was set to fly from her New York home to Chicago for a play when summoned by her agent to audition for Matthew Robbins.

"I was so tired and strung out about the play I nearly didn't go," she recalls, "it never occurred to me that I might get the role." But she did go, did a tape of the script, and landed the coveted role. But although Robbins was convinced he'd ►

found the right players, the Hollywood studios were harder to convince.

Eventually the young actors were flown to England to shoot tests with cameraman Derek Vanlint (who lit **Alien**) on the fabulous sets created by Elliot Scott.

When the results came, MacNicol definitely had the role, but another girl was to be tested for the role of Valerian.

At Robbins insistance, the Hollywood bosses reluctantly agreed he might retest Clarke as he was so convinced she was right for the role.

After the second screen-test, everyone agreed she was Valarian.

During MacNicol and Clarke's initial run-through of the script with Sir Ralph Richardson, he instantly put them at their ease by saying, "I'm not in favour of blood sports in private life but I thought it might be fun to indulge in a dragon-hunt on the screen."

While the young Americans were studying with an English voice teacher to lessen the impact of their American accents against those of the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre player which had been chosen for the featured roles, for feeling they would be able to handle the costumes and language of the Sixth Century than contemporary players, Barwood and Robbins cast Sidney Bromley, Peter Eyre, John Hallam, Roger Kemp, Emrys James, Ian McDiarmid and Chloe Salaman.

The only other American representative being Albert Salmi a film and television actor. But the real star of **Dragonslayer** is Vermithrax the dragon. A forty-foot dragon with a ninety-foot wingspan, it was designed by David Bunnet and Phil Tippett of George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic Inc. in conjunction with director Robbins and built by the special effects department at Disney's Burbank Studios under Danny Lee's supervision.

Vermithrax's young offspring — three dragonlets — all of whom David Bunnett and Ken Ralston designed to be operated by puppeteers from I.L.M.

Special effects wizard Brian Johnson brought his team from **Alien** to animate the dragon, and other special effects.

Elliot Scott's creation of the 6th Century village of Swanscombe on a farmsite some ten miles from Pinewood is masterly. Researched in the British Museum and his own large reference library, Scott created the village within the bounds of documented fact but admits that a great deal of imagination went into creating the village and the interior of the ancient wizard's castle and the King's castle.

Though a full review will follow next month we can report that Matthew Robbins' direction, the sets, the costumes (Anthony Mendleson) the spectacular special effects, Derek Vanlint's incredible photography and the fabulous acting help make **Dragonslayer** the ultimate in medieval fable. ●

NEXT MONTH: ALAN JONES REVIEWS DRAGONSLAYER PLUS MORE COLOUR PICTURES!

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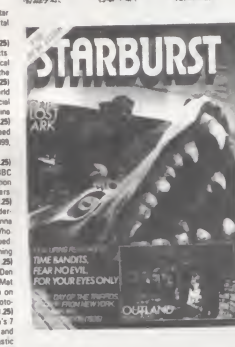

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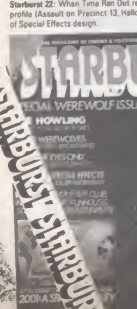

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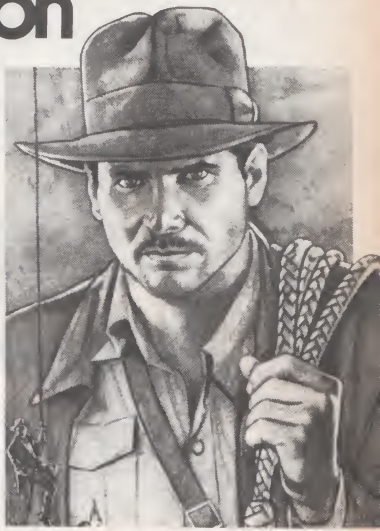

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An exclusive report from our Hollywood correspondent Bill Warren

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THE THING

Howard Hawks' production of **The Thing from Another World** was a sensation in 1951; one of the scariest movies anyone had seen at the time, it became the favourite film of director John Carpenter. Now, Carpenter is in the interesting position of making a picture that is based on the same story as **The Thing from Another World**, but which he claims isn't "a remake", but, rather, a new version. John Carpenter's **The Thing** is bound to be the sensation of the summer of 1982, if it lives up to advance word.

The story this time follows the original 1938 John W. Campbell novella "Who Goes There?" much more closely then does the original picture. An American base in Antarctica is infiltrated by a creature from another world, a hostile alien capable of ingesting any living creature and making itself look like what it has devoured. You are what you eat, and you eat what you want to be is The Thing's motto. Furthermore, it can be more than one creature simultaneously: the Thing can be a dog, two men, and a seagull—or, presumably, an entire world at once.

The story of **The Thing** opens as a sled dog flees across the icy wastes of Antartica. A helicopter is in hot pursuit (the first scene filmed), and one of the two desperate Norwegians in it shoots at the fleeing sled dog. As the dog and copter near the American base, the machine crashes, killing one of the men. The dog runs toward the puzzled Americans, and the Norwegian keeps firing. The Americans think the terrified man is trying to kill them, and shoot back—killing the Norwegian.

After examination, the dog is allowed to wander around the base, finally being put in a pen with the other dogs. And then things start to happen. Or the Thing starts to happen.

After the mysterious events in the dog pen, two leaders of the American expedition, played by Kurt Russell and Richard Dysart, go to the Norwegian base to try to discover just what happened.

They find it in ruins. They creep through the shattered, snow-riddled buildings; a man slumps in one chair, having slashed his own throat. Frozen blood binds his dangling hand to the floor. Blood is everywhere. Bodies are everywhere. A portable video-recorder and a tape are discovered—as is a huge mass of ice with a scooped-out center.

Back at the American base, they run the videotape, which shows some horseplay in the snow, and then the discovery of a huge *something* buried under the ice. The Norwegians try to use thermite to free the circular object, but it burns and melts under the snow. But they hack out a chunk of ice containing what may have been the pilot of the buried craft—if that's what it was—and take it back to their base. That's where the tape ends.

And now something is creeping through the Americans' base.

The Thing began production in the late summer at Universal studios, where Rob Bottin and his effects crew have created a $1.5

Opposite: *Kurt Russell inspects the remains of the Norwegian encampment.* Left: *John Carpenter (behind the camera) directs a scene during the shooting of* **The Thing.** Below: *Carpenter (left) on set.*

million monster. Bottin says the film will "be the **Star Wars** of the monster movies," and it's his biggest challenge. He has to create creatures which change shape on screen—but nothing so simple as changing from a man to a wolf, as Bottin accomplished in **The Howling.** This time, the shapes that result were born in nightmares.

Bill Lancaster's script is excellent, as all who have read it attest. It's witty, sharply characterized and laden with mystery. If John Carpenter's abilities as a director are up to the script—and a six-minute clip from the picture shown at science fiction conventions strongly indicates they are—**The Thing** is bound to be a smash success.

In addition to Carpenter and Dysart, the cast includes Wilford Brimley, T.K. Carter, David Clennon, Keith David, Charles Hallahan, Peter Maloney, Richard Masur, Donald Moffat, Joel Polis, Thomas Waites and Norbert Weisser. Wilford Brimley has rapidly risen to the top ranks of character actors; his moving performance as Jack Lemmon's buddy in **The China Syndrome** brought him to his earliest notice. A part in Sydney Pollack's **The Electric Horseman** led to his current role in Pollack's **Absence of Malice,** in which he plays a shrewd Southern politician so well and so showily that he is certain to receive an Oscar nomination.

Richard Masur is also excellent, but hasn't received as much notice as yet. He was so strong in the first season of the US tv series **One Day at a Time,** as Bonnie Franklin's boyfriend, that he had to be written out—he was dominating the show without even trying. As one of the killers in the underrated **Who'll Stop the Rain Dog Soldiers,** he was completely different (he was the big one with the beard) that most people didn't even recognize him as the same actor.

Donald Moffatt was the android on the tv series of **Logan's Run,** and his affable, straight-faced charm added to what little lustre that show had.

Exterior sets for **The Thing** were constructed in Stewart, British Columbia. These buildings were put up in the summer, and by the middle of the winter, when they have been covered with quite-real snow, the cast and crew of **The Thing** will return there to film the exterior scenes. In the 1951 production, a peculiar error led to the similar scenes being filmed in the San Fernando Valley in the summertime. Sets were built on an air base near Denver, Colorado, but the expected snow never came. When locals were asked why not—after all, all the surrounding area was heavy with snow—the movie crew was told that it never snowed in the area where the sets were. After all, that was why an air base had been built there: no snow.

The Thing is a $13,000,000 production, by far the largest budget in Carpenter's career. But if the film is as good as its promise, there'll be no stopping John Carpenter from now on.

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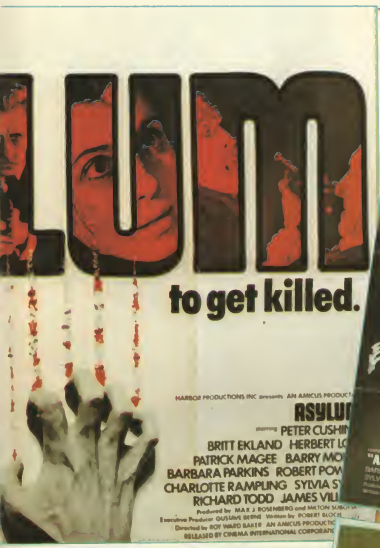
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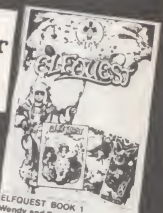

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VIDEO SCENE

by PETER CARGIN

The Visitors Are Always With Us

The cinema has naturally tended to follow science fiction literature in that there have been two types of travellers in space, those going out from Earth and those visiting us here, generally uninvited and unwanted.

CIC Video have recently released the old 1953 "classic", **The War of the Worlds**, directed Howard Hawks always insisted, by Byron Haskin. This was taken from H.G. Wells' novel of the same name in which Martians invade the Earth and cause a good deel of hevoc. The film had good (for the time) special effects from Gordon Jennings, Wallace Kelly, Paul Lerpae, Ivyl Burts, Jan Donels and Irmin Roberts which kept things interesting but, sadly, the largely unknown cast of Gene Barry (the exception), Ann Robinson, Henry Brandon and Les Tremayne were pretty wooden, but if you've never seen it then video does at least provide you with the opportunity of catching up with it.

Some fifteen years later in 1968 the Japanese produced a jolly little item called **Goke, Bodysnatcher From Hell**, which has new surfaced on video. In this we have a flying saucer causing a plene to crash in the desert, the survivors of the crash soon find themselves with a problem on their hands, in the shape of Goke, the alien creature from the space ship who has the nasty habit of changing people into vampires by splitting open their heads! The pilot and the stewardess manage to effect a temporary escape but not for long, as other flying saucers are making their way to help out!

Of course ever since **Alien** we've seen space crews encountering nasty things in space and a pretty recent rip-off on the **Alien** theme was **Inseminoid**, which has quickly found its way onto video. From Sir Run Run Shaws' stable, we find ourselves with an archeological expedition on a far planet; the expedition is in the hands of a lady (Jennifer Ashley) and there are a good proportion of other femeles doing legitimate duty among the group, including Stephenie Beacham as the reporter and Judy Geeson. Two male members of the expedition are mysteriously affected by some stones they discover and it is not long before death gets to other members of the crew in unpleasant ways. Ms Geeson is then sent out with another crew member to investigate but gets captured by whatever alien creature is on this planet. However, it is not seeking to kill her, it has other plans, wishing to prolong its own species it makes her pregnant. She also aquires superhuman strength and soon outwits and out-fights the other rather dumb members of the group before giving birth to a couple of nasty creatures. They are the only living things alive when a rescue mission comes to the planet and they manage to sneak aboard the space ship, presumably to wreck havoc back on Earth. The whole thing is merely an excuse for various chases in underground chambers, etc, and some special effects credited to Oxford Scientific Films don't really make the film more than a cheapie **Alien**. No character is really given enough time to establish a personality before getting bumped off and the whole thing develops into a confused chase.

Inseminoid was only released in the cinemes earlier in 1981, but the next movie **The Return**, which has visitors coming to Earth from space, is getting a prior release on video before cinemas. Unlike the others I have mentioned here, it has a pretty starry cast in Cybil Shepherd, (who has really broken away from the Peter Bogdanovich mold now), Jan - Michel Vincent, old Ironside himself, Raymond Burr, and Mertin Landau, veteran of many sf films.

Director Greydon Clark does not perhaps have such a comforting track record, a previous effort of his was **Without Warning**, (the one with the deadly flying pancakes which I mentioned in an earlier piece).

If **Inseminoid** was following up the **Alien** line, then **The Return** has more than a touch of the **Close Encounters** about it, but without the spectacular effects (it obviously did not have the budget of that movie for it is again set in the traditional small town so beloved of visiting specemen/craft.

Another link with **Close Encounters** is that the first scene, where the mysterious lights in the sky turns out to be a spacecraft, is one where young children come under the influence of the visitors. The little boy and little girl are taken up some twenty-five years later by the story and by this time have become Sybil Shepherd and Jan-Michel Vincent; he's still in the area, as the local cop; she is a research worker in the big city, working for big daddy, Raymond Burr. Aerial photographs have shown up something peculiar in a small area in New Mexico and it's not long before Ms Shepherd is on her way to find out what it's all about—naturally she meets up with the cop and two further inevitabilities follow, she realises that she's been there before and also that she's in love with Vincent.

Soon cattle are being mysteriously savaged, Ms Shepherd is attacked by a vicious dog and later by local cattlemen who somehow feel that she's responsible for what is happening. There is a good deal of mumbo-jumbo spouted by Raymond Burr at the science research station and a certain amount of use of our old friend the laser beam in the countryside to chop up unwary people before the film loses its marbles at the end and disintegrates. A pity, because it has a nice premise to it; that of the marks left by space visitors for their return some years later—sadly there are just too many questions left unanswered and the special effects are fairly small beer compared to those we have seen in recent science fiction movies.

More Golden Turkeys

Lastly let me just mention that another film featured, nay an Award Winner from the Golden Turkey Awards book, is now available on video. *Matango, Fungus of Terror*, a Japanese contribution directed by Inoshiro Honda, which is also known as *Attack of the Mushroom People* in America. The story concerns the crew of a yacht who land up on a deserted island and on eating a fungus start turning into giant mushrooms—fortunately, the film has a forword warning all shipwrecked travellers never to eat a mysterious fungus unless it has been approved by the Board of Health!

Video Index

The War of the Worlds, CIC Video, (138/9, Piccadilly, London W.1. 01-626-7211. **Goke Bodysnatcher From Hell & Matango, Fungus of Terror** both from J.V.I. Video Films, Unit 2, 25, Milkstone Road, Rochdale, Lancs, (0706 47980). **The Return**, Video Unlimited, Patrick House, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1JF. **Inseminoid**, Brent Walker through Videospace Ltd, 272, London Road, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 7DJ.

it's only a movie

First Moronic Youth: "My brudder bought a diamond engagement ring for only . . . uh . . . seventy five pound."

Second Moronic Youth: "Really? Where?"

Moronic Girl (to First Moronic Youth): "Oh, that was *years* ago!" (Then to the Second Moronic Youth): "You tight old *bleep*. I'm glad you're not *my* fiance!" Then she and the First Moronic Youth drive off on their motorbike, hopefully into the nearest ravine, leaving the Second Moronic Youth in a turmoil of indecision and guilt over how much he should spend on his fiance's engagement ring . . .

If the above little scene is instantly familiar to you then you have the misfortune to be a regular cinema-goer. It's from one of my least favourite cinema advertisements which seems to have been around for as long as I can remember. Just when you think it's been a while since you've seen it and the hope begins to blossom that it's finally been consigned to the furnace it pops up again like Bruce Forsyth . . . I hate it even more tha I hate those Martini Bianco ads with that bunch of "upmarket" cretins waltzing around various international tourist spots (and all shot and edited in a style that was last trendy back in the 1960s).

I know I've sounded off before in these pages about the purely British tradition of inflicting a long series of advertisements upon suffering cinema audiences (see *Starburst 32*) but it's a subject close to my heart. And if anything the situation seems to be getting worse—it maybe just my imagination but it appears to me that the number of adverts you have to endure before being permitted to see the movie you paid money to see is increasing all the time, especially if the main feature happens to be a guaranteed blockbuster. The more popular the movie, the more rubbish the distributors pile up in front of it. . .

I've long suspected that the people who run British film distribution have only a tenuous connection with reality but this was confirmed once and for all last November when London cinemas started running an ad that was even more ridiculous than usual (and invariably attracted hoots of derision from audiences): it was to publicise a special program at one of the Classic Haymarket cinemas that would consist *entirely* of adverts! Yes folks, two hours of non-stop adverts, apparently all winners of awards at some international tv and film ad festival . . .

Watching this advert for what must have been the ordeal of the century I realized that the twits who operate the cinema circuits in this country have no idea that the adverts are greeted by audiences with all the enthusiasm of French aristocrats getting their first sight of the guillotine. On the contrary, those twits presumably think we go to the cinema just to *see* the ads or why else would they think there'd be an audience for a programme that consisted of nothing but two solid hours of them?

Every year UK cinema admissions drop alarmingly (admissions for 1981 are expected to drop between 10 and 15 percent on 1980s, which was an *all-time low*) and every year the UK distributors wring their hands and wonder why, not realizing that it's because of *their* out-of-date methods and policies that the British cinema circuits are dying on their feet. As another example of how out of touch they are with audiences let me repeat a story recounted by cartoonist Dicky Howett (who draws *Flickers* for this magazine among other things). Recently he took part in a radio phone-in programme along with the Distribution Manager for Rank Cinemas. Says Dicky: "I congratulated this gentleman on his successful campaign to reduce cinema audiences by littering first-run feature programmes with tatty filler films (**Look at Death** lives on!), and I gave as an example a highly imaginative little item entitled **Greenock: Gateway to the North!** Very suitable for Chelmsford, this (even **Terry Wogan at Windsor Wildlife Park** paled beside Greenock's attempt to entice smug suburbanites up to the hairy north). A true cinematic disaster.

"Mr Distribution Manager replied that his patrons expected a full evening's entertainment . . . I tried to argue that his so-called 'evening's entertainment' seemed to consist of material one normally found on television—and indeed instantly switched off! A simple luxury denied the cinemagoer who, entrapped in the expensive, urine-soaked upholstery of the average picture-palace, has no access to the projection room.

"Then stay at home!' was my opponent's snappy reply."

And those four words sum up the distributors' attitude towards their audiences, but the point is that more and more cinemagoers *are* staying home every year in this country. How long is it going to be before the industry sees the light? Probably not until every cinema in the U.K. has been turned into a supermarket or bingo hall . . .

Is there any solution? Well, all I can suggest is that every time you are forced to sit through drivel in return for paying out your hard-earned cash you write a letter of complaint to the manager of the distribution company concerned, be it Rank, EMI or whoever (Rank own the Odeons, EMI owns the ABCs and Lord Grade's mob owns the Classics though apparently he's trying to unload them onto somone else . . .). Possibly a futile gesture but it might achieve something.

And now onto something completely different: I recently caught up with **The Amityville Horror**, or rather it caught up on me, pouncing on me from behind like a drunken football fan with halitosis. It's basically a tacky piece of work even though it has a couple of good creepy sequences and the always watchable Margot Kidder, but what most struck me about it was the way its storyline closely resembled that of Kubrick's version of **The Shining**. Not only does it concern a father being slowly taken over by the evil influence in a building but it even has a sequence where he breaks down a bathroom door with an axe to get at his family. Now I can't believe that Kubrick got his idea for Jack Nicholson's mad axeman routine from watching **The Amityville Horror** but it certainly didn't come from King's novel so all I can say is that it's very odd . . .

And speaking of Stephen King I read where he is being sued for seventy five *million* dollars (that's one thing about the Americans—when they sue they *really* sue) by a woman who claims that **The Shining** was based on incidents related by her to her psychiatrist/social worker between the years 1972 and 1978. It all sounds pretty silly to me (for one thing the novel was published in 1977) but it makes you wonder about the kind of life this woman has been leading if it bears even a passing resemblance to what went on in **The Shining** . . . I mean, what with haunted hotels, corpses in bath-tubs, moving topiary animals, etc, it's no wonder she needed the services of a psychiatrist. But what's most surprising is why, after an experience like that, she didn't rush immediately to the nearest literary agent. That's what the couple who experience "the Amityville horror" did and it sure paid off for them . . .

Finally, a plug for **The Wolfen** which Warner Brothers allowed to slip out with as little promotion or publicity as possible (a sure sign that it was a failure in America). There's a lot to enjoy in this movie, though admittedly Albert Finney is miscast as a New York detective, so try and catch up with it if you can.

And one last thing—who managed to sit through all of **The Aliens Are Coming** which was shown on the commercial channel recently? (At least it was in London—other regions may have yet to endure this monstrosity). It was an amazingly abysmal attempt to rip off **Close Encounters** as well as presumably being the pilot for a thankfully non-existent series similar in theme to **The Invaders**, but I have to admit I liked the aliens themselves. They reminded me of those creatures in the mashed potato adverts . . . you know, the "For Mash Get Smash" ones . .

Oh hell, I'm back onto advertisements again . . . Is there no escape?

book world

The boom in sf illustrated books seems largely to be over, a process helped at least in part by the demise of the most ambitious packager, Pierrot Publishing. But the occasional title does still appear, and the glossiest recent entry to this particular market is *Galactic Tours*, illustrated by David Hardy, with text by Bob Shaw (Proteus, £4.95). Subtitled "Thomas Cook: Out of this World Holidays" it purports to be just what that suggests: a 22nd century Thomas Century holiday brochure. It's a pleasant conceit, and one which may well help sales along if the book is stocked in Cooks' many branches.

For your money you get some 25 large paintings—some single-page, but mostly two-page spreads—by Hardy, illustrating various exotic scenes in the Solar System and far beyond, plus a deadpan holiday-brochure style text by Shaw describing the delights of each stopover on this imaginary itinerary.

This sounds an attractive enough idea, but in practice the book is a disappointment, for two reasons. First, the text is too flat, too lifeless. It doesn't feel as though Bob Shaw really had his heart in it. This is a pity, as in many ways he seems an ideal choice: a readable, colourful writer with a good sense of humour. I think what the book needed, also, was a text with some stronger linking idea. Each capsule of text is self-contained. There's no incentive to read through the book. There's no *story*. It may seem absurd to demand one, but I think story is what gives life to books of this kind; without it they remain abstract exercises in imagination.

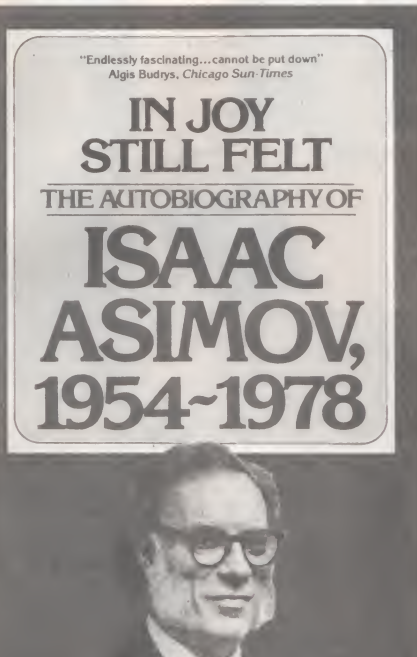
But it might even so have been rescued by really outstanding illustration, and here lies the second disappointment. Most of the paintings seems to be disappointingly flat and crude. The figures are lifeless, the landscapes are unconvincingly drawn, even the colour sense is lacking. Hardy is quite a widely published artist: he has done astronomical books in collaboration with Patrick Moore, and various sf magazine and book covers. But his technique doesn't seem strong enough for these full-size reproductions. The text sections contain small-size reproductions of the paintings, and oddly enough many of *these* look quite good. The reduction in size masks the technical deficiencies and tightens the compositions. On the whole, though, the book cannot really be recommended.

Arrow Books seem to be going out of their way to promote Gene Wolfe, which is nice to see. A lot of sf authors get promotion these days, but rarely the truly talented ones. Wolfe's first short story collection is now out, *The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories and Other Stories* (£1.95)—yes, that *is* the right title. It's inappropriately packaged to make it look like another fantasy epic, but don't pass it by: its 400 plus pages probably represent sf's best buy of the year.

Wolfe is a remarkably talented writer, at his best at least the equal of anyone else in sf. His only problem is that he is sometimes so clever and so oblique that you need to read the stories more than once before the penny drops and you realise what he's driving at. Normally this is not much of a recommendation: the difference with Wolfe is that he repays the effort.

The collection is in everything but name a Best of Gene Wolfe, and I find it hard to pick out individual stories. Personal favourites include the title story—that is, "The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories"—with its clever slides from reality into fantasy and back; the savagely effective "The Hero as Werewolf"; and the final story, "Seven American Nights" (revised here, I think, from its original publication), with its portrayal of a ruined USA of the future seen through the eyes of an Arab visitor. You'll probably have other preferences. In any event it's certainly a book to get.

One or two American titles have been coming my way lately (and should be obtainable through any of the proliferating specialist shops). *In Joy Still Felt* (Avon $9.95) is the second volume of Isaac Asimov's autobiography, and its 800 or so pages tell us everything that Asimov did between 1954 and 1978. So, you ask, what did Asimov do in those 25 years to justify such a monumental tome? Climb Everest singlehanded, perhaps? Play a key role in the American space programme? Work as a Russian spy? No, none of those things, actually. What he did—and pretty much *all* he did—was sit at home and write getting on for 200 books. Occasionally he would visit a publisher, or have dinner with some friends, or go to a science fiction convention, but this is not a life with significant incident. Or incident of any kind. Asimov has kept a diary all this time, and faithfully sets down what it tells him he did each day, but this provides little drama—and nor, incredibly, does it give you a great deal of insight into Isaac Asimov's personality, except to tell you that he's a man with an



Above: *The cover of the new Isaac Asimov autobiography, which critic John Bowles describes as being worthwhile only if "you are as obsessed with Asimov as Asimov appears to be"!* Left: *The cover from* The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories and Other Stories *(no, really!).*

Shadowland (Berkley $3.50). Straub is the author of *Ghost Story*, a huge bestseller that put him very nearly in the Stephen King league. *Shadowland* is the story of two boys who spend a summer at the house of a master magician (the uncle of one of them)—a summer which gradually turns from fascination into terror. It's a promising subject, and the novel starts well (if slowly) with an extremely convincing portrayal of their school life, and the first intrusions of magic into it. Here Straub writes evocatively and well. Yet when he makes the much-anticipated journey to Shadowland (the magician's house) the novel falters. The magician himself is never a sufficiently interesting character, and the events become more and more the stuff of clichéd horror stories.

It's high time I said something in this column about the British Science Fiction Association, an organization which ought to be of interest to anyone out there reading this (assuming there *is* someone out there reading this). The BSFA has been going for well over 20 years now, and has had its ups and downs, but of late has been probably at its strongest ever. Run entirely by unpaid volunteers it has tended in the past to collapse from time to time when the bunch of people doing all the work got fed up and there was no one to take their place. Over the last two or three years, however, the number of people actively involved has grown to the point where changes in personnel can be encompassed without a hiccup. This is all very reassuring if you're a member, and must go a long way towards explaining the recent upsurge in membership numbers.

The BSFA publishes four magazines, all of which go free to members. There's *Vector*, a bi-monthly critical magazine, which is fairly serious and respectable (but avoids academicism); *Matrix*, also bi-monthly, which is a much more informal publication, including news of conventions, fan groups, fanzines, and a long letter column where even the newest member can join in; *Focus*, a twice-yearly magazine for prospective writers, with practical advice and some short stories: and *Paperback Inferno*, a kind of review supplement covering paperbacks and (occasionally) sf magazines. The BSFA has various other services: a postal library, a tape library and so forth. It's generally pretty good value for £6.00 per year. If all this sounds interesting write for further details to the Membership Secretary: Sandy Brown, 18 Gordon Terrace, Blantyre, Lanarkshire, G72 9NA.

New sf magazines on the horizon: *Entro* is a former fanzine with professional aspirations, which is supposed to be getting nationwide distribution as from January, though rumours as to its exact status are confusing and contradictory. Even so, watch for it. The first generally distributed issue features a previously published (but obscure) Christopher Priest story and an interview with Stephen Donaldson. *Interzone*, which I mentioned a couple of columns ago, announces an all-star first issue (due in February) with new stories from Michael Moorcock, Keith Roberts, Angela Carter, M. John Harrison and John Sladek; J.G. Ballard leads off no 2. This is less likely to find its way into your local W.H. Smith, so if interested send £5 for a year's subscription to 21 The Village Street, Leeds. LS4 2PR.

obsession for writing. I rapidly found myself skimming, as more and more pages merely recorded mundane information on his writing career. There are, of course, interesting bits of gossip, and until he gave up recording it I found the year-by-year details of Asimov's burgeoning income fascinating to follow (he stops giving the information after 1962, by which point it had reached $72,000, except to record later—when it became public during his divorce—that in 1970 the figure was up to $205,000; it would be an interesting exercise to fill in the other points on the curve, before and since!). But unless you are as obsessed with Asimov as Asimov appears to be, you can give this a miss.

I had reasonable hopes of Peter Straub's

Weird World

There was I, lulled into the false sense that this month's revolving round-up was going to be a quiet leisurely amble through a re-issue and a second recent *Planets* recording. Then a monstrous package arrived via our beloved Editor, and amongst them a couple of gems.

However first the re-issue. Jeff Wayne's *Musical Version of The War of the Worlds* was first issued by CBS a few years ago. Since then it has spawned a couple of singles, a poster, a re-issued original book and a resplendant black and gold boxed set which apparently contains all the afore-mentioned items, though I must admit I haven't delved into the last item. What it hasn't produced, presumably to Jeff Wayne's chagrin, is the musical/film/stage-show/holographic laser extravaganza or Airfix kit. Back to CBS though and they've come up with a single LP version of the original double offering—*Highlights from Jeff Wayne's etc.*

Obviously, bits are missing, though the two best-known tracks—Justin Hayward's Eve of the War and Forever Autumn—are preserved.

In the main the editing has been careful to keep the story-line, though the ending goes slightly awry. Tracks missing are the actual landing of the Martian cylinders and the journalist's first encounter with the artilleryman from the original first record and a fair percentage of the Parson Nathaniel scenes from the second. The odd bit comes at the end where the continuity has been reversed. On the double album the artilleryman—David Essex—does his song about the Brave New World which is then followed by Richard Burton's disertation on Dead London and the reason why the Martians suddenly met with their death. On the new record, these tracks are reversed and the latter part of the monologue—the fact the Martians are dead—is omitted. I can understand why ending on a song was thought desirable, though not why the logical sequence was lost. It's a pity that Brave New World couldn't have been edited down slightly and the last, rather vital, part of the story retained instead.

H.G. Wells hasn't done too badly from the media over the years—numerically if not necessarily aesthetically—and the same can be said of Jules Verne.

Verne's story "Robur the Conqueror" formed the basis of **Master of the World** and is one of these films that tends to get shown every Christmas. The musical soundtrack isn't the sort of score that automatically finds itself issued as an album, but a small American record company Varèse Sarabande has specialised in bringing some of the lesser-known compositions to the public's attention. Some are their own transcriptions and some they rescue from decaying record catalogues. **Master of the World** was originally issued on Vee Jay Records though I suspect it has been out of their lists for many years. The composer is Les Baxter and the style is late 50s/early 60s movie symphonic—if that means anything. The score is pleasant to listen to, though nothing startling and does require quite a few plays to get into. The problem is that there are very few film soundtracks indeed that can *a)* stand up as a piece of music completely in their own right and *b)* don't require repeated playings to appreciate all the nuances!

If Vincent Price's Robur is a well-meaning guy at heart really, can the same be said of Kurt Russell's Snake Plissken? John Carpenter's films invariably acquire cult status. I will carefully avoid mentioning **Dark Star** as I've blown the next review but it was the first and via such films as **Halloween** and **The Fog** we arrive at **Escape from New York**. Not only directed and co-written but scored by Carpenter, along with Alan Howarth, who appears to have handled the programming for the synthesised tracks that form the basis of the album. The Main Title theme is a catchy little number that manages to be tuneful and slightly menacing at the same time and it's one of those pieces of music that is immediately memorable. It starts like Argent's "Hold Your Head Up," but goes into a definite off-beat with the sythesisers accompanied by what sounds like a banjo-mixture that works surprisingly well. Like it! And just to show that it isn't all mayhem, one track is an electronically released version of Debussy's Engulfed Cathedral, played by Pamela Smith, and which forms an interesting comparison to Tomita's rendering of the same piece on his album *Snowflakes are Dancing*.

Having pre-empted myself, the new album has to be **Dark Star**. The cult film of cult films, it saw the initial partnership between Carpenter and Dan O'Bannon starting as a 16mm college project, it eventually got blown up to 35mm, increased by half as much again and released. The music as such wouldn't fill half a side so you have what was done with Flash Gordon and much of the dialogue (and sound effects) has been kept as well. Even so it really only works if you've seen the film for then you can re-live again such memorable moments as Pinbeck's altercation with the Alien, Dolittle's chat with the dead Commander Powell and Talby's daydreaming of the Phoenix Asteroids. If you are a *Dark Star* fan, this record's a must.

Moving the genre sideways to horror for the moment we come to a compilation album from Citadel entitled *Horror Rhapsody*. The music of the title is one side only and takes the form of a suite assembled by veteran composer Hans J. Salter of themes he wrote for such sagas as **Son of Frankenstein, The Mummy's Hand, Black Friday** and **Man Made Monster**. They've all been woven together into a single piece and it's guaranteed to bring back the memories of those 40s horror films. Side two of this album is completely different, taking the form of the soundtrack by John Cacavas to the movie **Horror Express.** The film was set on board the Trans-Siberian Express, occupied by a number of nationalities and similarly Cacavas's score reflects this. Balalaika's rub shoulders with a cimbalom (that odd Hungarian instrument you bash with hammers most famous for is usage in Kodaly's Hary Janos Suite), and Chinese and Russian themes battle for

position. I think I also got a glimpse of the Kojak theme, which Cacavas also wrote made even more appropriate as one of this film's stars was Telly Savalas.

Yet another jump and change of style to George Romero's **Dawn of the Dead**. Music here is supplied by the Italian rock group Goblin and the tracks stand up remarkably well on their own. In many ways it's more like listening to any modern rock/electronic instrumental group rather than a soundtrack recording. The tracks vary considerably. The opening Zombie is very rock/jazz orientated; track three, Safari, takes on an African tribal chant sound, while the following Pie in Face sounds like the accompaniment to a silent film. On side two of the record, the opening track, Shriek, is pure rock, while Target Shooting ends up with a Latin-American beat. The final track, The Awakening is a minute of solo piano. In all a surprisingly together album, and I supposed the other Romero film represented amongst the records to be, at least, a bit similar. It isn't. The film is **Martin** and the composer is Donald Rubinstein. His background is jazz and chamber ensembles and the scoring reflects this.

The 22 short tracks range from string quartets, through solo vocals, to chants on an obeo. Audio flashes of other works flitted through my mind—Villa-Lobo's tongue-twisting Bachianas Brasileiras and the sort of tunes that accompany Eastern European cartoon films. It's all very odd, but strangely compelling.

The last film soundtrack album this month is from my second favourite sf film. I regard **2001** rather like a Rolls Royce. It's at the top permanently and everything else has to be counted from the number 2 position. So what is number 2—**Star Wars? Empire? Close Encounters? Altered States?** They're all very good can vie for third position, but my personal number 2 is **Silent Running**.

This was released originally by MCA and I managed, after ordering, to get a copy. It's been missing from the catalogue for years now, but again Varèse Sarabande have come to the rescue. The music is by Peter Schickele, who I vaguely recall turned up a few years ago on *Start the Week* or some similar Radio 4 programme? The two songs ae performed by Joan Baez, who's rendering of same was found to be a bit too much by some people, but I found they fitted the context of the story perfectly. It sounds like only a small orchestra was used but Schickele has managed to get a very full sound out of them, especially for the majestic The Space Fleet. Starting with just the percussion, the main theme starts on the brass, is taken up by the woodwind and is finally augmented by the strings. All in all a perfect bit of orchestration.

Finally this month, another Holst's The Planet's recording. This time is a Deutsche Grammophen record of Karajan conducting the Berlin Philharmonic. It's a bit daunting for it's not like, say, comparing Meco's **Star Wars** with the original, for here are two famous orchestras under two prominent conductors, albeit one rather more experienced, on two well-known record labels and they are both digital discs. So much is down to personal taste. You may, for example, prefer Simon Rattle's slightly faster, but a little bit more mysterious opening to Mars, to Herbert von Karajan's treatment who takes it slightly slower. Venus—the quiet after the storm—is taken even quieter by Karajan, though both conductors take the piece at the same restful pace. Mercury, the next movement and the scherzo of the suite—befitting the messenger of the gods—is taken very very similiarly by both conductors. Karajan's Jupiter, in contrast to his Mars, is taken at a faster pace than Rattle and the Philharmonia. It's also louder! The contrast between Jupiter and Saturn couldn't be greater although both conductors take it at a similar speed, Simon Rattle's version is, for me, the more desolate. The jump to the magician from the old-aged Saturn is as great a contrast. It's an extremely difficult piece, both to play and for a pick-up to track. Full of xylophones and staccato brass it'll check out your cartridge if nothing else! The Philharmonia bump along at a slightly uneven pace compared to the Berlin Philharmonic, but possibly it suits the character of the piece better. However very near the end of this movement there is a short rising scale played on of all things a harmonium which the DGG recording includes, but the HMV doesn't.

The final movement, the mysterious Neptune, is my personal test. If they can get this right, it'll colour all other judgements. However it wasn't easy. Both recordings come over extremely effectively, but I think the Rattle/Philharmonic just has the edge. It's quieter and slightly more mysterious than the Berlin Philharmonic. But remember it's purely personal, both are extremely cleanly recorded, the digital process helps here, and well-pressed, though it's a bit disturbing to note that the EMI record is also pressed in Germany! So if you are contemplating a new recording of *The Planets* try to listen to both before you make up your mind. ●

TECHNICAL DETAILS

The Varèse Sarabande and Citadel recordings are only available as imports. These and *Escape from New York* were supplied by Forbidden Planet, copies *War of the Worlds* supplied by CBS and *The Planets* supplied by Phonogram.
Records Reviewed: Highlights from Jeff Wayne's War of the Worlds, CBS 85337. Master of the World, Les Baxter—Varèse Sarabande VC 81070, £6.25. Escape from New York, John Carpenter—That's Entertainment Records, TER 1011, £5.49. Dark Star, John Carpenter—Citadel Records CT 7022, £6.25.
Horror Rhapsody, Hans J. Salter/John Cacavas—Citadel Records CT 7012, £6.25.
Dawn of the Dead, Goblin—Varèse Sarabande VC 81106, £6.25.
Martin, Donald Rubinstein—Varèse Sarabande STV 81072, £6.25.
Gustav Holst—The Planets Suite, Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, DGG 2532 019.
Silent Running, Varèse Saraband STV 81072, £6.25.

TV ZONE

Since this column began, some eighteen months ago, a lot of people have asked about a central television organisation.

Not strictly a nostalgia buffs' corner or an esoteric series' fan club, but a group of tv enthusiasts who seriously evaluate the present and examine the past.

A group dedicated to the higher and wider consideration of television's past, present and future—be it English, American or even Japanese tv.

A group intent on making 'old' tv shows more accessible and urging tv companies to adopt a more sincere approach to television history.

In June of 1980 such a group was formed. Under the name of WTVA (Wider Television Access), with headquarters based in London, their objectives are... well, I'll let their declaration of purpose speak for itself:

"Forty years of culture lies locked away in forgotten film stores and inaccessible archives. Countless hours of television history, each one watched by millions, are now dumped in vaults and seen by no one.

"WTVA exists to open those vaults. It aims to make television's past widely available, both for nostalgic pleasure and for discussion and much needed documentation.

"WTVA wishes to illustrate that the work which survives has the same vital interest today as literature and cinema's history. So WTVA wishes to stimulate critical awareness and understanding of these programmes, to catalogue the works of directors, chronicle the history of studios and chart the rise of genres.

"In recent years attempts have been made to tackle this gargantuan task. The British Film Institute and several American museums and organisations have begun to take television history seriously. Commendably the BBC has prised open the archives to screen its own past productions, classic US comedy shows and segments from **The Outer Limits**.

"WTVA intends to start regular viewings of the wide variety of material which is already available. It hopes to start discussions linked to those viewing and to co-ordinate writing and research based on them. But it also has the task of persuasion.

"That such screenings do not occur at present is partly because of complex copyright questions, which WVTA hopes to tackle, and partly because of lack of commitment within organisations like the BFI. Another contributory reason is that almost all distributors and exhibitors believe that no-one is interested in 'old tv'. If it can be shown that a sizeable, committed and

BY TISE VAHIMAGI

knowledgeable audience exists for such material, then WTVA believes that some of the problems can be overcome and that more and more screenings will be stimulated.

"The growing availability of video-recorders means that public screenings can now be supplemented for research purposes by individual viewings and re-viewings, particularly of contemporary material. Such a growth of awareness should then increase concern for American television in mainstream criticism and at events like the Edinburgh Television Festival. Eventually a regular and serious television magazine must be started, taking its cue from successful American publications like *Emmy* and *Panorama*."

Since this initial declaration, WTVA (in conjunction with London's Scala Cinema) has programmed regular screenings of material such as **The Avengers** (both colour and black and white episodes), all seventeen hours of **The Prisoner, Danger Man** (in both its ½-hour and hour formats), **Alfred Hitchcock Presents, The Untouchables**, etcetera, etcetera. For the coming year WTVA plans to launch the mammoth programme of "The History of Television" at the Scala Cinema.

On the publication front, WTVA has already launched it's own journal—*Primetime* magazine. Issue One of *Primetime* premiered last summer, containing features and articles on material ranging from **Dragnet** to **The Twilight Zone** to **The Avengers** to **Hill Street Blues**; alongside a 1961 nighttime programme chart of US/UK shows and an interview with Richard Matheson. Issue Two (Autumn '81) offers a breakdown on **The Professionals**, Joe McGrath (one of the talents behind **It's A Square World**, etc), the tv work of Mike Leigh, tv book reviews, US/UK schedule retrochart for 1964, and lots more.

Oh, yes—extending across both issues is an **Avengers** episode guide, taking it from **Police Surgeon** episodes in 1960 through to the last Linda Thorson in 1969.

The third issue of *Primetime* is due to hit the stands sometime in January, 1982.

Because this column receives mail with comments and questions extending way beyond tv fantasy/sf items from a curious yet caring tv fandom it seemed that the time had come to coordinate these far-flung teleastes (from America to New Zealand) into an established organisation. And that organisation is Wider Television Access.

For further information you should contact: WTVA, c/o The Scala Cinema, 275-277 Pentonville Road, London NW1, England. ●

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SEAN CONNERY

Interview by Tony Crawley

On April 28, 1976, the news leaked in London about a rival to the official 007 films. By May 12, it was official. A full page advertisement in the showbiz Bible, *Variety*, announced the production of **James Bond of the Secret Service**, a Peradise Film production of a script written by none other than Sean Connery, with Len Deighton and the project's producer, Kevin McClory. "One of the most exciting screenplays I have ever read," said an attached letter from top agent Irving Paul Lazar. Shooting was slated for February, 1977, in the Bahamas, New York and Japan. Paramount Pictures jumped in later with a distribution deal and the title, which had originally been **Bond and the Secret Service**, was finally trimmed to the zippier **Warhead**.

Since when . . . nothing!

Or nothing but writs flying to and fro, legal hassles and arguments galore, suits and countersuits. At one point, McClory, Connery, Bramwell Films and Paradise Films sought an injunction to prevent the making of **The Spy Who Loved Me**, due to an alleged copyright infringement, and similarly Cubby Broccoli, Eon Productions, Danjaq Films and United Artists rushed to court to stymie the making of **Warhead**.

In many respects, this was a re-run of 1964, when McClory having won the legal rights of the tale in 1963, was independently setting up **Thunderball** as the third Bond movie, and eventually made a deal with Cubby Broccoli and his then Eon partner Harry Saltzman to produce it together as the fourth Bond film. It appeared, therefore, that the tall, urbane Irishman was hoping lightning would strike twice and that all parties would get together again for another Bond party.

They didn't. As far as McClory's company was concerned it became a case, in more ways than one, of Paradise lost . . .

In the midst of all the high-level (and high-financial) arguing, United Artists then chairman, Arthur B. Krimm, issued a strong statement asserting that "no person, corporation or entity other than Danjaq and United Artists can use or grant rights to use the character 'James Bond—007' in any film which goes beyond the story of **Thunderball**, and anybody who proceeds on any other premise does so at legal peril."

And Krimm added a terse footnote. "No advertisement can change these facts."

"I agree . . ." responded McClory with his own terse footnote a week later: "An advertisement can state the facts."

Well, the facts were well enough known, but still a matter of protracted legal dispute (see panel for fuller details). Ten years after the event, the rights of **Thunderball** reverted to McClory for him to utilise in any re-make(s). United Artists may have forgotten that, but acknowledged it. McClory, however, disputed their interpretation of the facts.

These cannibalistic cinema manouevres were all very interesting and par for the course when one producer tries to rip off, legally or otherwise, the success of another in order to clamber aboard the gravy train. That's merely taking care of business. ►

THE WARHEAD FILE

Although Hollywood's expatriate Russian actor-director Gregory Ratoff (1897-1960) was the first film-maker to show interest in bringing James Bond to the screen, it was the suave, rich Irishman Kevin McClory who first started tailoring Bond for the movies. And in the scriptwriting partnership with Ian Fleming, himself.

Ratoff, a terrible old ham of an actor and not much better as director, bought the rights to Fleming's first Bond book, **Casino Royale,** soon after the 1953 publication. His movie plans came to naught but the tale turned up as an episode in a long forgotten tv show in 1954, which if nothing else, always supplies a quirky query for film quizzes. Who was the first James Bond? Barry Nelson, not Sean Connery, so there!

McClory says he learned all about the movie business through ear-phones as a £14-a-week sound-boom at Shepperton studios. He wanted to become a producer and to this end, he wrote an underwater thriller set in the Bahamas. He then met Ian Fleming and suggested they work together on a Bond scenario. It would be a simple enough matter to turn McClory's sea adventure into an original Bond yarn. Fleming agreed and they collaborated, in fact, on several Bondian notions together. Write Jack Whittingham joined them for what became **Thunderball**.

At the 1958 Venice film festival, Kevin McClory announced plans for this as the first as the first Bond film. Nothing came of it, and Fleming went on to use some of the script's narrative for his 007 novel, **Thunderball**, in 1961, without McClory's consent.

Also in 1961, Cubby Broccoli heard that fellow producer Harry Saltzman's film option on the Bond books was due to expire in 28 days. Cubby called Herry and Eon Productions was born. In 1962, they produced **Dr No** and the start of the Bondanza.

McClory's ambitions were being thwarted on all sides. He'd lost his film chance, and seen various of his ideas incorporated by Fleming in his book. McClory is a fighter, though.

In December, 1963, he took Ian Fleming to court and won. McClory was awarded complete copyright of all the scripts he and Fleming had worked on . . . the film and tv rights to the **Thunderball** novel . . . plus £35,000 damages and £17,500 in court fees. Fleming kept the literary rights to **Thunderball**, but all future editions of the book had to carry the credit: 'This story is based on a screenplay treatment by Kevin McClory, Jack Whittingham and Ian Fleming.

Flushed with victory, McClory announced plans for the third Bond film— **Thunderball**—in January, 1964, while in Rome. Without or without Connery, he said, depending on any deal he could make with Saltzman and Broccoli, already preparing their third Bond film, **Goldfinger**, in London. McClory felt an arrangement was possible. But involved . . . It sure was. It took a year to resolve. In 1965, McClory and his Bahama corporation, Bramwell Films, and Broccoli and Saltzman's Eon arrived at a gentlemen's formula. They'd make **Thunderball** together. Which they did. And **Thunderball** proved the biggest 007 hit until **Moonraker** fourteen years later!

A vital clause in the contract stated that the copyright of the script would revert to McClory ten years after the film was released in Britain, and that he'd not produce any other 007 films in that time-span. McClory calculated everyone would forget that clause. And so, it seems, they did.

Ten years later, McClory jogged their memories. He announced **James Bond of the Secret Service**. His writers included himself, Len Deighton (author of the books leading to Michael Caine's Harry Palmer series) and . . . Sean Connery. "I knew that Sean didn't want to play Bond again, but he probably knows more about Bond than anyone else and he certainly has a vast number of ideas about what Bond can do. He's also a very good writer."

And as if to stick it to them, or Broccoli alone as Saltzman had since quit the Bond series, McClory added, "I've enough material to make not just one Bond movie, but two others."

That's when licenses to kill et the box-office hit various fans in London and Hollywood. All the more so when Connery emerged not merely as one of the writers but the star of the new project.

No way, said United Artists which distributes the Broccoli 007 films. According to then-chairman Arthur B. Krimm, UA and Broccoli's Danjaq company alone had exclusive rights to Bond. No one else. The only exception to this was **Thunderball**, of course, since, yes, they had to agree, those rights were now McClory's again. But this exception, UA insisted, was strictly limited to the use of Bond in any **Thunderball** film remakes—but minus the right to use **Thunderball**, James Bond or 007 in the title of any such film re-makes. The character could be used in advertising and promotion but not in the title or titles.

McClory, ever the fighter, disagreed. Of course, he did. He couldn't be limited, he said, to a remake of a film which had not even been made when Ian Fleming had awarded the rights of **Thunderball** to him in the High Court. And anyway, he reminded UA, those rights were not just in the **Thunderball** novel but "also various scripts I worked on with Ian Fleming prior to the novel." The titles he listed included **Bond in the Bahamas, Latitude 78 West** and **James Bond of the Secret Service**.

Whether these were all scripts, or treatments or merely titles, and maybe alternate titles for what became **Thunderball**, has not been explained. Given the **Thunderball** underwater setting, and the fact that it had been scripted as the *first* Bond film, they sound all one and the same story to me . . . rather like Sylvestar Stallone's innumerable versions of the **Rocky** script he carried from studio to studio in Hollywood). No matter, even titles can prove valuable in the film business.

And so the battle went on, in and out of court, until Connery got fed up with all the litigation (he was already involved in another leal row in Hollywood over his £100,000 fees for 1975's **The Man Who Would Be King**). Connery had had enough of lawyers!

Since when, Kevin McClory hasn't been heard saying much about the Bond film that never was. **Warhead** seemed to be shot down by legal missiles or Connery's eventual departure. It would not surprise me, though, if we yet hear of McClory and **Warhead** again . . .

The entire **Warhead** affair does raise a few other Bond queries. If McClory retained his **Thunderball** rights after ten years, which is fairly usual in film circles, whatever happened to producer Charles K. Feldman's rights to **Casino Royale**, which he made as a terrible farce in 1967. Feldman died the following year. His rights to that first Fleming book (unencumbered by any deal with Eon) could be part of his estate. All it takes is for some wily producer to buy the rights from the Feldman family and the entire alternate Bond saga could start making headlines all over again.

Oh yes, it is possible. Where, for instance, did Feldman buy his rights from . . . but the estate of Gregory Ratoff

What was far more intriguing to the public who would eventually be buying the cineme tickets was thet Sean Connery—who had quit playing Bond with a good deal of rancour—was back in the fold. If only as a writer.

At first there was no suggestion, beyond his name writ large among the writing credits in the Paradise eds, that the former and definitive Bond would be returning to a role he couldn't wait to leave after various recriminations ebut money, not to mention the goldfish-bowl life it subjected him to. He had received £6,000 for kicking off Bond in **Dr No** (1962) end though the salary increased—£50,000 for **Goldfinger** (1964), plus e cut of the profits—he only ever got the price he felt he deserved on his farewell trip, **Diamonds Are Forever** (1971), one million bucks (then ebout £400,000) plus United Artists backing two films of his choice.

Thet **Warhead** was never made is hardly news. It's one of the greet if-onlys in cinema. If Connery had come back . . . If a new Bond has been found . . . If Roger Moore could have survived such opposition . . .

Seen Connery, however, hes talked little about it. But then he has never seemed overly happy in talking either (e) to the Press or (b) ebout Bond. Until Deeuville this yeer. He was in the French seeside town to open the seventh annual American film festival with his sf debut, **Outland**—alias **High Moon**. I caught up with him direct from seeing the first of his five films in Deeuville's retrospective of his work. It was the first time I'd seen **Dr No** in, heavens, nearly twenty years. (Yeeh, sure, it's slow now, and my goodness Ursula Andress was dubbed in it. It still worked. Less gadgets. More action. And there was Connery egein, plucking a hair from his then full head of heir to paste across e door-jamb with spit, to check if anyone rifled through his things. That had impressed me in 1962 as a real spy's trick . . . until seeing e jealous housemaid doing it to check on adulterous lovers Gerard Philippe and Denielle Derrieux in the French film of Stendahlos **Le rouge et le noir**, made in . . . 1954).

Connery, today, looks es if he's plucked many e hair out. He's 51, two years younger than Roger Moore, and in the best of heelth. He bristles with health. He'd flown to Deeuville direct from the Swiss locations of his new film for Fred Zinnemann, **Maiden**, **Maiden**, in Pontresina. That's his third film since **Outland** and he needed, he said, to make some mental calithesnics to discuss **High Moon**. Bond, though, proved no such problem . . .

***Starburst:** Does **Warhead** still exist as a property that* ►

could be made?

Sean Connery: No . . . Well, yes, it does. But there's so many legal entanglements that they haven't resolved yet.

What prompted you to work on the script when, as you stated at the time, you had no intention of playing 007 again?

What happened was I was doing **The Wind and the Lion** (1975) in America. Kevin McClory had the rights, after ten years, to go and do another reproduction on the similar theme of **Thunderball**. The ten years were finished. He came to see me—this was just before the January of the tenth year. I said I wasn't interested in doing it. He asked would I be interested in contributing in any way . . . with the experience that one had with the six previous ones I'd done. I thought about it and said, it depends who you've got writing it.

Enter: Len Deighton . . .

(He nods). I have a lot of respect for Len, so I said: Okay, as an exercise I'll do it. I worked with Len Deighton. We did a screenplay. McClory had all sorts of angles and so many people were wanting to contribute to making the picture, with funds and what have you. There was no problems, financially.

So, what stopped you?

I was under the impression that it was totally clean. Free from any litigational problems. When we started to talk quite seriously about the possibility, it became so complex. Ochl the lawyers came out of the woodwork by the hundred and because there was a lot of money involved *(the budget was stated to be about nine million dollars, with four for Connery)* it started to get all snarled up. The legal factors were harder to go through then to make the film. Then, the publicity started to work on it and I said: "That's enough!" And I walked away from it. That's really where I left it . . . nearly two years ago.

It's ten years since you left Bond, nearly twenty years since you started the series. Time supposedly heals all wounds. In hindsight, did you enjoy making the Bonds?

Yeah . . . The trouble with them was that they got progressively longer to do, which made it more and more difficult to even consider other work. Due to bad planning and what have you by the producers. I found I was being well deprived of the parts I could be doing which were more interesting for me and, in the end, that's what the longevity of an actor is about. The more diverse the parts you can play, the more interesting and stimulating and fun it is to do, and in turn, the wider the experience so there's even more things you can play.

The final straw was **You Only Live Twice,** (1967), the second last one I did. That took six months of my time—after two or three postponements which meant it was almost a year out of my life. It was a very erratic schedule with no consideration whatsoever for choice of any other subjects for me. I could never give people a firm date of conclusion. Therefore, any other film that would have been more interesting and rewarding, artistically for me, one was pushed out of. That was really the major fault.

Plus the typecasting, I suppose.

Well, that was part of it, too. I was getting other parts I wanted as I was doing the Bond films. But, if you consider there's only twelve months in the year, and if one film takes six months and the people who are supposedly producing it are that stupid that they cannot programme it properly, then it doesn't leave any flexibility within the year to be able to give a commitments to a picture like, say, I did a couple of films with Sidney Lumet, **The Hill** (1965) took seven weeks, **The Anderson Tapes** (1971), seven weeks too—and gave me the satisfaction of good, concentrated work and results. I would rather do three or four interesting films within the year, or that six month period, than do one that . . . I'm not certain about.

How do you feel the Bonds have developed since you quit Her Majesty's Secret Service? **For Your Eyes Only** *seemed to try, at least, to revert to your style, more direct physical action.*

I'd agree about that. I went to see it last week in San Moritz . . . or Pontresina, which is about the same. It was very kinda pacey and modern and it's obviously a huge success with all the people going to it, which I think is very good both for the film industry and for Roger.

But . . .?

But my reservations about it, for *my* choice, it's too flippant in the sense of humour. For the sake of a couple of very—I think—cheap jokes, they spoiled a lot of very good sequences. For example, in the very beginning there is a very good sequence in a helicopter, Roger going around in a helicopter being

remote-controlled by Blofeld. But then to throw it awey with a pey-off like picking up Blofeld end dropping him down a chimney gets a cheep laugh—and credibility goes out the window. For me.

That's my view. But I'm obviously wrong for the film is fantastically successful. That's the direction it's gone in—one that I don't appreciate.

You must have thought you disposed of Blofeld in 1971 anyway. Other other examples . . .?

There's a very, very good sequence of a car chase. You see three or four villains in a car with guns. They come alongside Roger—and he gives them a wave! Well, there's nothing to stop them blowing him away if they wished. So it defeets the whole purpose of the car chase. You take that wave out of it end it suddenly becomes quite realistic end thrilling end another dimension—from my point of view.

Do you have an explanation for the continued success of the Bond films?

Yeah, I think that the basic theme, which is still there, goes back to how one person wins through, however extreme and high the odds ere, and whether they're mechanical, sexual, weether or whatever. The lone person has to resolve it. With the assistance now, of course, of lots of hardware, as they call it.

You'd prefer more of the loner and less mec' i-calia?

Unless you can explain the hardware in humanistic terms, as we did in **Outland**. In terms that I could understand!

Given such parameters, would you ever consider playing James Bond again? John Glen, who could obviously do with your input, has been saying around Europe that he'd be happy to have you as his next Bond.

That's quite magnanimous of him. I don't know John Glen. I wouldn't certainly get my feet wet in that direction again unless I could do it my way

Which is . . .?

To be totally in unconditional control. That covers quite a few different ingredients. For example, as I said, my major complaint on the second last one I did was that it was six months, almost a year of my time, due, reelly, to appalling bad planning. When I did my last one, **Diamonds Are Forever** it was mainly on *my* conditions. It's interesting that it was the first one I ever started end finished on time!

How come?

Because one imposed such a heevy penelty on delays. I think I'm certainly as intelligent as eny businessman I've been involved with. There's nothing succeeds more than impressing businessmen with a heevy financiel penelty. That, they understand. *(Or they did after* ***You Only Live Twice*** *on which Connery is said to have picked up £170,000 in overtime penalty-payments alone; more than treble his Goldfinger salary).*

The other things, like the legal aspects of it, would have to be totally clean. No possible injunctions or eny of these boring legal aspects which for me are more energy-reducing than enything else. I wouldn't want to waste a lot of time end energy fighting legal hassles, which is in no way conducive to a good film.

Obviously, one would heve to be involved from the beginning of the project, in terms of its conception, writing, ideas and where it would go. To give a parallel answer, in the case of **Outland**, I liked the usage of the hardware, in that I could understand how O'Neil used it. Like in the instance with conglomerates in the film, they get bigger and bigger and it's invariably one person who has to come in end turn it round and resolve the problem. If I were doing another James Bond film, one would want to get closer to that kind of concept, which it was originally. With as much humour as possible.

Is this your philosophy about film-making in general?

Yeah. My philosophy about the basic vision of a film is that there is the A-stage and the B-stage. A is the first stage: when you've reed end believe what the concept of the film is, get together and make that film, look at it and think, "Yes, we've succeeded with A". Then, the B-stage is where it goes out and critics and the public have their shot at saying whether it's a success or not. So it's two definite stages and in the second one there is only a certain emount you can do about it. So many elements can be against you, like timing, the climate, people are not ready for that sort of film, or they don't see in it what you see in it. Many films that I thought at the A-stage were successful, and no matter what the critics or public said, I still think were successful—but they didn't go end see it. And there's quite a few of those I've been in.

Next month: Sean Connery discusses **Outland**, a new futuristic Hollywood film, and his entry into the sword end sorcery stakes.

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